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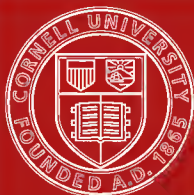
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PETER THE GREAT



Frontispiece.]

PETER.

PETER THE GREAT

BY

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P R E F A C E .

THE life of Peter the Great, so long the sport of legend, has been reduced to solid fact mainly by the labours of Ustriálof and Soloviéf. These have been made accessible to German readers by Brückner and to English readers by Schuyler. The present writer does not claim to have gone much beyond these two last authorities in the composition of his work. The brilliant essay of Waliszewski did not come into his hands until half the present book was in type.

OSCAR BROWNING.

KING'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE,
October 1897.

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LIFE OF PETER THE GREAT.

CHAPTER I.

PETER'S BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

PETER the Great was born in the Kremlin at Moscow at one o'clock in the morning on Thursday, May 30th (O.S.), 1672, being the festival of St. Isaac of Dalmatia. He was the son of the Tsar Alexis, and of Natalia Kirillnovna Narýshkin, whom the Tsar had married as his second wife on January 22nd, 1671.

The father and grandfather of Peter were not remarkable either for intellect or strength of character. They were not strong personalities like Michael the son of Philaret, the founder of the House of Romanof. Alexis, the son of Michael, ascended the throne as a child, and died at the age of forty. He was of a soft and gentle character, and was called by his subjects "The Most *Debonair*." He was served by unworthy favourites whom he had not the moral courage to get rid of. His subjects detested his advisers, but loved the man himself. He took part in the operations of war, and was devoted to the chase. He was fond of theological arguments, but was lax in the ceremonial of the Court. He wrote verses, and was not averse to music and the drama. He did something

Peter the Great

to break down the dull ascetism of the almost monastic life to which the Tsars had been hitherto condemned.

Alexis had been married in his early youth to Princess Mary Ilínitchna Miloslávsky. She had given birth to thirteen children in a married life of twenty-one years, and she herself died in childbirth on March 1st, 1669. Three months later Simeon, the fourth son, died ; and half a year after, at the age of sixteen, the eldest son, Alexis, heir to the throne. Two sons only now remained, Theodore, whose health was very weak, and Iván, or John, who, besides being almost blind, had a defect of speech and was nearly an idiot.

The chief minister of Alexis at this time was Artémon Serghéievitch Matvéief, one of the most enlightened of the Russians, and a warm advocate of Western progress. His father had been ambassador at Constantinople and in Persia. Matvéief himself had held diplomatic appointments at Paris and Vienna, at The Hague and in London. He had assisted Alexis to add Little Russia to his dominions. He had done good service to his country at decisive moments, both in peace and war. His house was furnished with all the luxurious appointments of Western Europe, and interviews with foreign ambassadors were frequently held there. He was much devoted to natural science, then regarded as closely akin to the art of the black magician. His wife was said to be of Scotch origin, which added to the unconventionality of his household. He was the head of the Court Pharmacy, and thus came into intimate connection with the surgeons and physicians employed in it.

Two of these, Sigismond Sommer, a surgeon, and a Greek named Spartari, who had been an ambassador in China, were companions in his researches. The latter of these two instructed the son of Matvéief in Greek and Latin, and the young man became such

a marvel of culture as to attract the attention of Leibnitz. The Tsar was so devoted to Matvéief that when he was absent from Moscow he wrote to him and said that he and his children felt themselves like desolate orphans without him.

There is a tradition that the Tsar Alexis, left a widower, as we have described, at the age of forty, met in the house of Matvéief the beautiful Natalia Narýshkin, the daughter of an old comrade of Matvéief, Cyril Narýshkin, who was living with him as ward. The stories related of their lives rest upon report alone, but are probably not devoid of truth. However, it was entirely contrary to the ordinary practice that the Tsar should of himself seek a bride in a private house. The custom was to assemble in the palace all the most beautiful girls of the country, to the number of several hundreds, and from them the Tsar made his choice.

The stake at issue was a large one. The friends and relations of the selected bride attained honour, riches, and influence. It was a triumph of one family over another, so that the struggle for the hand of the Tsar led not only to cabals and jealousies, but to infamous intrigues.

This ceremony was not omitted in the case of Alexis. But the choice had been carefully rehearsed beforehand. Natalia was amongst the candidates, and she was chosen without hesitation. This result was of course attributed to the black arts of the magician Matvéief. Two anonymous letters brought the accusation. Every effort was made to discover the writer of them, but in vain. They had, however, the result of delaying the marriage of the Tsar for nine months. As we said above, it took place on January 22nd, 1671.

After the marriage everything went happily. The spring and summer were spent in the numerous villas and palaces which surrounded the capital of Moscow.

Peter the Great

The Tsar was devoted to his wife, and never left her side. During the winter it became known that the birth of an heir might be expected, and at the end of May the happy event took place. It was especially important, because the two surviving sons of Alexis were in feeble health. Early in the morning the great bell of the tower of Iván the Great announced the glad tidings, and at the same time gave the summons to a service of thanksgiving.

The Kremlin at Moscow is one of the most remarkable places in the world. It consists of a lofty fortified platform, enclosed by walls, and entered by gates. It holds within it the most sacred churches of the capital and the ancient bells of the Imperial palace. The sight of it recalls in different degrees the Acropolis of Athens and the temple platform of Jerusalem.

On this stately stage a long procession moved from the palace to the Cathedral of the Assumption. At its head were the clergy, clad in golden robes, swinging censers, and bearing crosses and banners; then came in due order the officials, the nobility, and the heads of the army; and lastly the members of the royal family and the chief citizens of Moscow.

After a service in the Cathedral of the Assumption, the long line of worshippers passed to the Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel, then to the Miracle Monastery, and to the Monastery of the Ascension, and finally to the Cathedral of the Ascension, where Mass was celebrated. Their march had brought them back again to the palace. Here the Tsar held Court in the great banqueting-hall, and received the congratulations of all present.

It was a significant fact that at this first public ceremony after the birth of the child, the family of the Tsarsita were raised to high honours. Her uncle Theodore Narýshkin, her father Cyril, and her guardian and protector Matvéief, were singled out for distinction.

Such was the reward for success in the competition for the Emperor's hand. To secure the Imperial alliance was the surest way to favour, but also the surest to jealousy and perhaps to ruin.

Many stories are told about the childhood of Peter which, although perhaps not all historically true, are still interesting, and illustrate the habits of the time. When a Russian prince was born it was the custom to paint an image of his patron saint upon a panel of wood the exact length and breadth of the child. The taking of Peter's "measure," as it was called, was performed three days after his birth, and the child was found to be nineteen and a quarter inches long and five and a quarter inches broad. On the board of cypress-wood were painted the Holy Trinity and the apostle Peter. This relic is now said to hang over Peter's tomb in the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul at St. Petersburg.

The young Prince was from his earliest years surrounded by a luxury which was very foreign to his character and which he heartily despised in manhood. He had an apartment of his own, with troops of servants, and an especial bodyguard of male and female dwarfs, which, it may be supposed, were thought more suitable to a child than companions of the ordinary size. His cradles were covered with Turkish velvet, embroidered with gold; the sheets and pillows were of white silk, and the coverlets of gold and silver. His garments were of velvet silk and satin, embroidered with gold, pearls, and emeralds. He drove out in a tiny carriage, drawn by ponies. His first teacher, Satof, had picture-books specially made for him. He had the command of every kind of toy that a child could desire, or the affection of relatives could present. We can imagine that bows and arrows, pikes and spears, swords and cannon, formed no small portion of them. From the beginning his education had a military air.

Peter the Great

Young Peter grew rapidly, and was able to walk when he was six months old. An eye-witness tells us that, when a little more than three years old, he drove in his own carriage, covered with gold, drawn by four dwarf ponies, and that at the side rode four dwarfs on ponies, and another dwarf behind. Lighter amusements were not wanting. At the palace of Preobrazhénsky, the favourite sojourn of the Imperial family, Matvéief built a small theatre in which a number of plays were performed by German actors. They were generally religious mysteries, the tone of the ancient Russian Court being extremely ecclesiastical. We hear of *Judith and Holofernes*, in which a servant cried out after the murder : "The poor man will be very much astonished, when he wakes up, to find that he has lost his head."

Esther, acted seventeen years before the famous drama of Racine, gave an opportunity for contemporary allusions. The Tsar and the Tsaritsa were Ahasuerus and Esther, Matvéief was Mordecai, while the part of the detested Haman was given to a member of the Miloslávsky family, now in comparative disgrace. Joseph, the Prodigal Son, and Tobit, were the subjects of other dramas ; and after the play German musicians gave a concert or performed tricks of magic.

The life of the Court at Moscow must at this time have been very dull and monotonous. Dr. Samuel Collins, the Tsar's English doctor, has left us an account of it, published in the year 1671. The Tsar usually rose at four in the morning, and, after dressing and performing his private devotions, went with the Tsaritsa to an early Mass. When he returned to the palace he found the nobles and courtiers waiting for him, and received their reports and petitions. At nine he again went to Mass, which lasted two hours ; but during this he was permitted to transact business.

At the same time he was very religious. Dr. Collins tells us that in the season of Lent he would stand in

church for five or six hours at a time, and make as many as a thousand prostrations, on great festivals even fifteen hundred. After Mass he continued to transact business, which was usually completed by twelve o'clock. The Tsar then went to dinner, where all meat and drinks were carefully tasted. He was very simple in his diet. Indeed, he was continually fasting. Collins says we may reckon he fasted almost eight months in twelve, with the six weeks fast before Christmas and two other small fasts. Even at the great feasts, the dishes were usually given away.

After dinner the Tsar went to sleep for three hours, a rest which he must have sorely needed. At four o'clock he heard vespers, when business was again transacted. After supper the rest of the evening was given to amusement, although, as we have seen, his pastimes frequently assumed a clerical character.

Such was the life at Moscow. In the country he prayed less and amused himself a great deal more. Indeed, the Tsar was not only a monarch, but a priest. The first Romanof had been the son of the Patriarch, and even now the coronation of the Tsar is as much the consecration of a religious as the installation of a civil head.

The position of the Tsaritsa was even worse. A Russian wife at this time was bound in slavish obedience to her husband, and was accustomed to his blows. Her duty was to stay at home, to look after her husband's comfort, and to perform the humblest household duties. The Terém, or women's apartments, in which the Tsar's family lived, was as jealously secluded as an Indian zenana. The princesses never appeared openly in public. They only went out in a closed litter or carriage. In church they stood behind a veil. Even their doctors were not allowed to see them. On the occasion of a medical visit the windows were darkened, and the Tsaritsa's pulse was felt through a piece of gauze.

At this time the Terém of the Kremlin was occupied by twelve princesses—the sisters, the aunts, and the six daughters of the Tsar Alexis, all of them unmarried. They had all been educated with the old prejudices, but we shall see shortly that one of them, Sophia, was soon to break through them. Natalia set herself against these outworn traditions. She had been brought up by a Scotchwoman, the wife of Matvéief, and was determined to resist the tyranny of etiquette. Still, she had a hard struggle. The first time that she lifted the blind of her carriage window to see the crowd that thronged around her, she produced a storm which she had difficulty in allaying. At last she contrived to ride in an uncovered carriage, even in a State procession. She witnessed entertainments from a gallery, or from an open window. At last she got so far as to go openly to church.

At the end of January 1676 the Tsar Alexis died, after a short illness, at the age of forty-seven. His eldest son Theodore, now fourteen years old, had been declared of full age two years before. The Narýshkin party had hoped that both he and Iván would die before their father, as their health was very weak. But the sudden death of Alexis destroyed their hopes, and there could be no doubt about Theodore's succession. This brought about a palace revolution. The Miloslávsky family came again into power, and Matvéief was sent away to a distant government in Siberia. He had not reached his destination when he learned that he had been accused and found guilty of practising magical arts, being convicted chiefly by the possession of a treatise on algebra which he had purchased for the education of his son. He was deprived of all his property and honours, and was banished for life to the province of Archangel. Two of Natalia's brothers were subjected to a similar fate, and she herself was sent, with her son and daughter,

to live in the village of Preobrazhensk, about three miles from Moscow.

The most powerful person in the State was now Iván Michailovitch Miloslávsky, a cousin of Theodore's mother. He was not sprung from a very ancient family. Dr. Collins tells us that he was once of "so mean account that he drew wine to some Englishmen and his daughter gathered mushrooms and sold them in the market." The old nobility tried to counteract the influence of this family by introducing some young favourites to the Tsar, who they hoped, would obtain influence over his weak mind. They, however, preferred their own interests to the interests of those who had raised them, and followed the usual plan of introducing the Tsar to a wife of their own choice. Theodore, who was only eighteen, fell in love with the pretty girl whom they presented to him at first sight, and the young men obtained the honours they sought. Their power, however, only lasted a short time, as the Tsaritsa died just a year after her marriage.

Iván Yazýkof and the two brothers Likhatchéf were now in great alarm. They had offended the Miloslávskys and also the princesses, Theodore's sisters, while they had not obtained any position of protection for themselves. The old nobility were naturally much enraged with them. Therefore their only resource was to take up the Narýshkin family and the party of Peter. In spite of warnings, they persuaded Theodore to marry again, and proposed to him Martha Apráxin, the god-daughter of Matvéief, now fourteen years old. Theodore only survived the second marriage two months and a half. He died on April 27th, 1682. Before her marriage Martha had persuaded Theodore to cancel the sentence passed on her godfather Matvéief. His property and estates were restored, but the death of the Tsar prevented his actual return to the Court.

CHAPTER II.

THE CRISIS OF 1682.

AT this time there was no regular law of succession to the Russian throne. Michael Romanóf had founded a dynasty whose claim to the succession was generally accepted. But within the members of that dynasty something like a free choice was admissible. Alexis, the elder brother of Theodore, had died during his father's lifetime, and two were now left—Iván, the son of Mary Miloslávsky, fifteen years old, but blind, lame, and half an idiot, and Peter, the son of Natalia Narýshkin, who, even at the age of four, gave some promise of his future greatness.

Theodore had made no provision for the succession, and, although Iván was the elder, it was felt that he could not reign by himself. His accession would mean a perpetual regency, whereas the accession of Peter would only imply a minority for a time. The struggle lay really between the Miloslávskys on the one side, and Matvéief with the Narýshkins on the other; and the latter party was the more popular with the great nobles of the kingdom. Therefore the aristocratic party and the leading men generally took the side of Peter. At the same time they were so much afraid of disturbance that might end in bloodshed that they came to the Kremlin with coats-of-mail under their robes.

The body of the dead Tsar was, according to custom, exposed in state, and all the magnates of the kingdom kissed his hand in token of reverence, and then paid

their respects to the two princes his brothers. They then retired into another room, where the Patriarch asked of them which of the two princes should be Tsar. There was a general response that it should be decided by a popular vote. This could easily have been done, as delegates from every part of the kingdom were then present in Moscow—assembled for another purpose. They had, however, no idea of a popular plebiscite, and meant nothing more than asking the opinion of the crowd assembled in the Great Square below. The question was put by the Patriarch solemnly to the multitude, and the large majority exclaimed “Peter Alexéievitch!” The few voices raised for Iván were soon drowned. The Patriarch returned into the palace, and gave his blessing to Peter as Tsar. His mother, Natalia Narýshkin, was naturally regent. Still, the rights of Iván and the hopes of the Miloslávskys were not to be extinguished without a struggle.

Among the sisters of Theodore there was one of exceptional vigour of mind and energy of purpose—Sophia, now about twenty-five years old. Although she had been brought up in the seclusion of the Terém she had energy enough to discard its restrictions. On the day of Theodore’s funeral nothing could prevent her from accompanying the body to the church ; and she shocked all prejudices of traditional propriety by showing herself openly to the crowd, and giving loud expression to her grief. This stimulated the sympathy of the people, whereas they were offended by Natalia leaving the church before the funeral was over, for the very good reason that Peter could not support so tedious a ceremony at so tender an age. Also the behaviour of the Narýshkins was not free from reproach. When Sophia came back from the church she made a speech to the people, saying that she and her sisters were helpless orphans, with no father, mother, or brother, to defend them.

We now approach the story of the mutiny of the Streltsi, or body-guard of royal archers, which throws such a lurid and romantic light over the beginning of Peter's career. The details of their rising are not called in question, but their murderous outbreak is sometimes ascribed to a sudden impulse—indeed, to accident. It is now certain that this was not the case, and the revolution which they caused must be ascribed partly, indeed, to their own just grievances, but mainly to the intrigues of Sophia and the Miloslávskys. The victims of their fury were all designated beforehand ; their names had been written on a proscription list, and, when the judicial murders were at an end, the tumult stopped.

The Streltsi had been founded as a kind of national or royal guard by Iván the Terrible. They were composed of twenty-two regiments who, according to the custom of the day, bore the name of their colonels, who, it may be presumed, contracted for their maintenance. They were officered by Russians, and were subject to regular discipline. They were quartered in Moscow and a few other towns, and, like the Prætorian guard of Rome, had a separate part of the city assigned to them. They were generally married, and their duties descended to their sons. They were subject to no taxes, and were allowed to trade on their own account so long as it did not interfere with their military duties. They were therefore something between a regular army and a militia. They belonged to the Russian people and yet were separated from them, forming a privileged class whose influence might be formidable on occasions. At this time they had many grievances, some of them, no doubt, well founded. They complained that their colonels cheated them of their pay, that they compelled them to work as their servants instead of letting them attend to their own affairs.

Their complaint found a voice even before the death

of Theodore, and the Government committed the serious fault of letting the men punish their own officers. Efforts were made to prevent this, but in vain. Fourteen of the offending colonels were flogged in the presence of the Streltsi, and the soldiers were allowed to fix the amount of the punishment. Even this was not enough. The Streltsi insisted upon the losses they had suffered being made up to them, and next day their colonels were publicly tortured until they consented to pay. Not until every farthing had been made up were they allowed to go to their houses in the country.

The Government now deemed that the disturbance was at an end, and that the solemn procession of the new Tsar to the cathedrals and monasteries of the Kremlin might take place. When the long line of nobility and officials returned to the palace, the usual reception was held, and according to custom the relations of the Tsar's mother were promoted to high rank. This roused the Miloslávskys to anger, and they could see no better way of revenge than allying themselves with the Streltsi. These soldiers had not been at first ill-disposed to Peter, and on the day of his accession, April 27th, only one regiment had refused to take the oath of allegiance.

On this momentous day Matvéief had been restored to all his ranks and titles; but he had not returned to Moscow. He had been a great favourite with the Streltsi, and it is said that they had once brought stones from their fathers' graves to build his house. Perhaps he thought it better to let the storm blow over in his absence, and it was not till May 11th that his long years of banishment came to an end. He was received with great enthusiasm. All the regiments of the Streltsi brought him bread and salt—"sweet honey on the sharp knife," as his son remarks in his account of these events.

There was a vague feeling of unrest in the air.

Thunder was brooding in the sky, and no one knew when it would burst. Undoubtedly during these days the plot between the Miloslávskys and the Streltsi had been maturing. The list of those who were to be murdered was carefully drawn up, and among the first names was that of Artémon Matvéief. There were forty-five others.

In the early morning of May 15th, the Streltsi, fully armed, were collected in the churches of the different quarters in which they were stationed. At nine o'clock a man rode through the streets crying, "The Narýshkins have murdered Iván. To the Kremlin! Punish the traitors! Save the Tsar!" The tocsin was sounded, and drums were beaten. The Streltsi marched to the Kremlin with their banners flying, compelling their colonels to lead them on. The attack was so sudden that no resistance was possible, and the regiments penetrated to the palace. They stopped in the square before the Red Staircase, down which the Tsar and the Tsaritsa solemnly descend at the time of their coronation. They cried, "Where is Iván? Death to the traitors!"

Natalia went on to the balcony of the staircase, leading the two boys in either hand. "Here is the Tsar Peter," the nobles cried as they pointed them out to the Streltsi. "Here is the Tsarévitich Iván. They are safe and well. There are no traitors here. You have been deceived."

It is said that the soldiers climbed up to the balcony and stared Peter in the face, who looked at them without any sign of fear. Also they asked Iván if it were really he, and he replied "I am he" in a weak and trembling voice. Natalia took the children back into the palace. Matvéief spoke to the mutineers in soothing tones, and it seemed as if all would be well. But at this critical moment Prince Dolgorúky came out and, wishing to show his authority, told the Streltsi in angry tones to go home and

attend to their business. This spoilt everything. Dolgorúky was seized and thrown down from the balcony on the spears below.

This gave the signal for more bloodshed. The Streltsi rushed into the palace. Their first victim was Matvéief, who was dragged to the balcony of the Red Staircase, thrown into the square, and cut to pieces. The chief object of their vengeance was Iván Narýshkin, Natalia's brother, whose elevation they especially resented. Prince Soltykof was killed in mistake for him. Another brother was found and slaughtered. Strict search was made for a Jewish doctor, Daniel von Gaden, who was believed to have poisoned the Tsar Theodore. Night alone put an end to the uproar.

The following day the Streltsi returned to the palace and demanded the surrender of Iván Narýshkin and of Daniel the Jew. They even searched the palace of the Patriarch, hoping to find them there. The Danish Resident, Butenant von Rosenbusch, has left us a graphic amount of the disturbance. He was believed to be sheltering the Doctor and his son, and was taken to the palace to be confronted with the son, but while on the road, saw his dead body being dragged about the streets. He was brought face to face with Natalia and Sophia, and then allowed to return home again. He was present at a critical moment when Iván Havánsky asked the Streltsi whether they wished the Tsaritsa Natalia to be banished from the Court, and they answered "Yes."

On the same day Prince Basil Galítsyn, with whom Sophia was passionately in love, was made minister of foreign affairs, and Havánsky and Iván Miloslávsky were raised to high office. On the third day, May 17th, the Streltsi came again to the Kremlin and insisted on the surrender of Iván Narýshkin. Sophia told Natalia that she must give her brother up. He was taken to the church of the Holy Saviour, where he

received the Holy Communion and prepared for death. Natalia then led him herself to the golden wicket, where the Streltsi were standing. They seized upon him and tortured him. At the same moment Gaden was brought in, clad in the dress of a beggar. He and Naryshkin were first tortured, then lifted up on the points of spears, and finally cut to pieces and trampled in the mud.

Vengeance was now satisfied, and the murders were at an end. The Streltsi went to the Kremlin and said, "We are content. Do with the other traitors as you please." However, on the following day the Streltsi insisted upon Cyril Naryshkin the father of Natalia, becoming a monk. His younger son escaped in disguise, as also did the son of Matvéief. The seal was set to these events by the formal exile of the Naryshkin, young Matvéief, and other adherents of Peter.

The Streltsi published a justification of their conduct, saying that they had taken up arms to defend the family of the Tsar. They asked permission to erect on the Red Square, in front of the palace, a column, on which should be inscribed the names of all the malefactors whom they had killed, and the cause of their death, also that a declaration of indemnity should be sent to all the regiments of the Streltsi, that no one might be punished for what he had done. The Government was too weak to forbid the erection of the column ; but its existence was short, and in November it was destroyed, at the request of the Streltsi themselves. The iron plates with which it was covered, and which contained the inscriptions, were torn off and burnt, and the very foundations were dug out of the ground.

CHAPTER III.

THE REGENCY OF THE PRINCESS SOPHIA.

THE appearance of the Princess Sophia in public affairs marks an epoch in Russian history. The old cloistral life of the Terém was now at an end for those who had the courage to break through it. Sophia had the energy of character to show herself in public, to discard the old Russian dress, to live the life of the world. She received her reward by being preferred to a place of higher authority than her sisters and her aunts, who had equal chances with herself.

The Streltsi had risen in the interests of Iván. They did not, however, wish to depose Peter, for he was the son of a Tsar, and had been duly declared Tsar by the Patriarch. They therefore asked that Iván and Peter should reign together, a curious arrangement for which some precedents were alleged. It was argued that there might be an advantage in having two kings, because when one went to the wars, the other could stay at home and govern the country, recalling the peace and war kings of prehistoric man. This was agreed to ; but it was with great difficulty that Iván could be induced to consent to the arrangement. The Streltsi insisted that Iván should be first Tsar, and that Peter should be subordinate to him ; also that the Princess Sophia should be regent. The Streltsi received the honourable title of the " Palace Guard."

The coronation took place about a month later,

Peter the Great

on June 26th, 1682. A platform was erected under the dome of the cathedral of the Assumption, covered with crimson cloth, to which two paths of scarlet velvet conducted from the Sanctuary. On the centre of the dais was set the silver gilt throne of the Tsar Alexis, divided by a bar down the middle, so that it could be occupied by the two boys. A hole was made in the back of the chair, so that the sovereigns might be prompted as to what answers they should make. Iván was crowned with the ancient regalia, now preserved in the Treasury of Moscow, one of the most interesting collections in the world, which had been presented by Constantine Monomachus, the Emperor of Constantinople, to the Grand Duke Vladimir of Kief. Imitations of these of a very inferior character had been made for the use of Peter. By the side of the Tsar a throne was set for the Patriarch, who was now to appear as their equal for the last time in Russian history.

On the day of the coronation the bells of the Kremlin rang out at daybreak. At five o'clock the boy-Tsars attended matins and then proceeded to the banqueting-hall. Their robes were cut from the same piece, and the candles which they carried were of the same length. The long train of nobles and officials then passed solemnly, as it does to-day, down the Red Staircase to the cathedral of the Assumption.

After many prayers the Tsars recited the story of their accession to the throne, and asked the Patriarch to crown them. He inquired to what faith they belonged, and they answered, "To the holy orthodox Russian faith." At the same time they set forth in a long speech their intentions with regard to their reign. They were then solemnly crowned, after which a sermon was preached. Then followed the Mass, and the two Tsars, as being priests as well as kings, went into the Holy of Holies behind the altar, and ad-

ministered to themselves the Eucharist with their own hands. They then visited, according to custom, the other cathedrals and sanctuaries of the Kremlin, and at last returned to the banqueting-hall, where they received the congratulations of their subjects.

Still, the throne to which they had succeeded was not a secure one. This had been shown, not only by the mutiny of the Streltsi, but also by an outbreak of religious dissent which has left its traces on the Church of Russia to our own day. This had first appeared in the early days of the Tsar Alexis, and arose, as religious disputes frequently do, from very insufficient cause. The Patriarch Nikon found that the service-books in use in the Russian Church were extremely incorrect, containing a great deal which was entirely unintelligible. He therefore had them compared with the earliest copies that could be found in the Russian libraries, and decreed that the use of the old books should be discontinued. This brought with it certain other changes—the pronunciation of the name of Jesus, the repetition of “Hallelujah!” twice or thrice in the service, and the giving of the apostolic blessing with two fingers only, or with two fingers and a thumb. The dissenters had to be put down by force of arms, and the monastery of Solovétsk, in the White Sea, which was the centre of their persuasion, held out for eight years.

At last the “Old Believers,” as they were called, were either stamped out or driven into obscurity. It happened that a number of the Streltsi were dissenters, and Havánsky, their commander, was a powerful protector of the sect. It was therefore natural that the triumph of the Streltsi should lead to a revival of religious disputes. Political considerations were mixed up in the quarrel. The reformed liturgy had much resemblance to the Roman Catholic, which was the religion of the Poles. So that the dispute became a portion of the contest between the Eastern and

the Western Churches, and between the Eastern and Western civilisations.

The traveller who visits the modern Kremlin may see standing by the wall, or on the steps which lead down to the river, groups of men engaged in disputation. They are discussing questions of religion, the Russian Church lending itself, like its Grecian prototype, to the minute discussion of details in ritual and doctrine. It was therefore natural that the dissident Streltsi should attempt to settle their differences by argument. They proposed that a public debate on the disputed points of the faith should be held in some public place.

It was necessary that they should have an able advocate, and after some delay a priest named Nikíta of Suzdél was chosen. He had been a dissenter, had gone back again to the new belief, and had again returned to dissent. He was an able man and might be supposed to be well acquainted with both sides of the question. Havánsky approved of the choice. The dissidents were very anxious that the discussion should take place before the coronation of the Tsars, in order that the ceremony might be performed according to the ancient rite ; but this was ingeniously eluded.

At last, on July 5th, the promised debate took place. Nikíta set up his reading desk with the old books close by the Red Staircase. The Patriarch, who was performing service in the cathedral, entered the palace by a back door, for Sophia had, at last, consented that the discussion should take place in the banqueting-hall, and determined to be present herself, with Natalia and her aunt Tatiana. The dissenters and the priests met together in the ante-room, and a considerable scuffle ensued, which was put an end to by Havánsky admitting the dissenters alone.

Curiously enough the crown was represented only by women. The young Tsars were not visible, and the double throne was occupied by Sophia and Tatiana the

sister of Alexis. Sophia did not receive her visitors with much civility. She asked them how they dared to go about preaching heresy, and exciting the common people to discontent. Nikita said that their object was to return to the ancient ritual. "It is not for you to manage Church matters," said the Patriarch; "you ought to be advised by Holy Church."

As Nikita was addressing the Patriarch the Archbishop Athanasius seemed to interpose, and Nikita rudely rebuked him. Sophia called out that Nikita was wanting to fight and that the Patriarch was in danger. She also reminded Nikita of his recantation, and took up a strong position against him. However, she allowed the address of the dissidents to be read.

When Nikita arrived at the point where it was stated that Nikon had perverted the mind of Alexis, she started up from the throne and said that she would not endure such talk, and prepared to leave the room. She threatened that if the dissidents behaved so badly, the Court would leave Moscow.

At last the petition came to an end, and an angry controversy ensued. The time for vespers was approaching, and all present were faint and weary, having eaten nothing the whole day. Sophia dissolved the assembly. Of course the dissidents declared that they had won. They ran down the Red Staircase, crossing themselves with two fingers, and performed a service according to their ritual in the Church of the Saviour.

Sophia saw that she must adopt other measures. She invited the Streltsi to the palace in detachments, and feasted them with beer and wine; she also gave them money, and promised them other rewards. It was not difficult to convert them, because they had no very clear idea what the dispute was about. They were easily persuaded that the Church was in danger. They turned against the dissidents, and delivered them up to justice. Nikita was beheaded on July 11th in

the Red Square, and his followers were imprisoned in different monasteries. The persecution of the dissidents produced a bad effect, because it set them against the crown, and the severities of his sister were to bear bitter fruit in the reign of Peter.

The dissidents had been put down by the aid of the Streltsi, but Sophia could not consider herself mistress in her own house until she had further broken their power, and, above all, the authority of their leader, Havánsky. In order to effect this Sophia put into action what she had previously threatened—the desertion of Moscow.

On August 19th the Court removed to Kolómenskoe, some distance from Moscow, a place which had been the favourite residence of the Tsar Alexis. The capital was left desolate. The nobles retired to their country seats and the merchants began to depart. The first of September, the Russian New Year's Day, which was usually celebrated with great magnificence, was this year dull and lifeless. A vague terror seized upon the population. The Streltsi sent a deputation to Kolómenskoe to declare that they had no evil intentions, and to beg the Court to return. Havánsky went in person to Kolómenskoe, and said that the nobles of Novgorod were marching on to Moscow to massacre the inhabitants. This was a pure invention, as was the report that Havánsky was plotting to murder both Tsars, Peter's mother, the Patriarch, and a number of nobles. He would then rouse the serfs against their lords, let loose a terrible war, and raise an Old Believer to the Patriarchate.

Sophia was much too clever to believe these statements, but she made use of them for her purposes. She sent a circular to beg the nobles and the armed force of the surrounding country to hasten to the protection of the Tsars. On September 14th she reached the village of Vozdvízhenskoe, only two hours journey from the famous monastery of Tróítsa, which

was strongly fortified. Here she received a letter from Havánsky, informing her that the son of the Hetman of the Cossacks was seeking an audience and asking for instructions. With true Oriental guile she replied in a friendly manner, thanking him for his zeal, and inviting him to visit her.

On the festival of her name-day, September 17th, Sophia found herself surrounded by a crowd of nobles, and by people of all ranks. The false charges against Havánsky were read, and he was condemned to death, together with his son. They were arrested by an armed force and brought to the village, where the Tsaritsa awaited them. Sophia knew that there was no time to lose. Havánsky was executed by a common soldier, for no regular executioner could be found; and the son, after kissing the lifeless body of his father, laid his head upon the block.

Pains were taken to appease the wrath of the Streltsi, who would, it was known, resent the death of their commander. But Iván, a younger son of Havánsky, had escaped to Moscow, and at his instigation the Streltsi seized the Kremlin. The Court shut itself up in the Tróitsa Monastery, which was capable of standing a siege. The Streltsi sent a deputation to Sophia, begging her to return to Moscow, and promising that everything should be quiet. The Tsaritsa demanded absolute submission and the surrender of Iván Havánsky. He, too, was condemned to death; but when his head was on the block, the sentence was commuted to exile. The Streltsi were induced to ask leave to destroy the column which commemorated the murders which they had committed, and, as we have before related, the column was destroyed. The Court returned to Moscow on November 6th, the nobility, or *boyars*, acting as a bodyguard instead of the Streltsi.

The position of Sophia was, at this time, very peculiar. She had been recognised as regent, and had therefore a right to exercise the government. At first

she kept herself in the background, and only gradually began to transact business with ministers, and to receive ambassadors. Up to 1685 she was only styled "the sister of their Majesties." From that date she was mentioned as "Autocrat" on an equality with her brothers; but it was not till 1687 that it became compulsory to give her that title. The ambassadors, in their reports, scarcely mention her name, and always speak of Russia as being governed by her favourite, Prince Golítsyn. His personality, indeed, was so remarkable that we must give some account of him in detail.

Prince Basil Golítsyn was at this time about forty years of age. He was descended from the princes of Lithuania, and had served in Little Russia under the Tsar Theodore. After the massacre of May he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in October 1683 Keeper of the Great Seal. He was the successor of Matvéief, whom he resembled in some particulars, as he resembled the Tsar Peter in others. He was imbued with Western culture and with Western ideas, and he could talk with foreign ambassadors in Latin, without the aid of an interpreter. Consequently he was very popular with the representatives of foreign Courts. He was not a bigoted supporter of the Greek Church, but was in favour of tolerance, and desired to give some privileges even to the Jesuits. He was one of the first supporters of the Swiss Lefort, afterwards the friend and favourite of Peter. Dining at the tables of foreign diplomats, he used to speak in favour of the institution of states-general as the beginnings of constitutional government. He had plans of far-reaching reform: the creation of a well-disciplined standing army; the maintenance of regular diplomatic representatives at all foreign Courts, the support of agriculture by the State; the development of commerce with China by way of Siberia; and even the emancipation of the serfs.

There is a wide gap between saying these things and doing them, but there is no doubt that Golítsyn saw the advantage, and perhaps the necessity, of making Russia a European Power. In these days the true art of statesmanship was unknown. It was believed that to desire a reform was to secure its being carried out, and it has needed more than a hundred years of disillusionising to convince us that no important change can be effected unless it is either produced or supported by the public will.

As a matter of fact little was done in the regency of Sophia to execute these intentions. We find a few alterations in the criminal law, a few unimportant regulations of police. It is of more moment that teachers of the Greek language made their first appearance in Russia. A few public buildings were erected, but we hear of no serious alteration either in government or in society. Even the beginnings of representative government, which had been made by Theodore, were now given up. The field was left open to the genius of Peter.

At the same time Golítsyn was in advance of his age. His palace was decorated with costly tapestries, pictures by celebrated masters, portraits of European princes, huge mirrors in gilded frames, painted glass, clocks, statues, wood carving and furniture. We are told of a magnificent orrery made of precious metals, and wall maps of Germany, in the prince's bedroom. The catalogue of his library has been preserved, and we find in it books in Latin, Polish, and German, on all kinds of subjects—works on political science and grammar, theology and Church history, geography and the art of war. He was like Peter in his fondness for foreigners, but unlike him in his tenderness towards Catholics. It was said of him that he had a French heart, and his son always wore the portrait of Lewis XIV. on his breast.

CHAPTER IV.

PETER'S BOYHOOD.

THE regency of the Princess Sophia lasted seven years, and marks the passage of Peter from boyhood to manhood, from the age of ten to the age of seventeen. Peter must have been a most remarkable child. Grown and developed far beyond his years, he possessed great beauty, a warm and affectionate disposition and a fascinating personality. It was difficult for any one not to love and admire him, or to refuse to see in him the future saviour of Russia. It is therefore not unlikely that Sophia, whatever jealousy she might have felt towards him, was sincerely attached to him, and gave the idea to foreign representatives that her chief desire was to hand the state over to him in good condition. With the poor weakling Iván Peter was always on the best of terms, as befitted so generous a nature.

Peter's mind was at a later period most set on ships, but as a child he began with soldiers. A day or two after the mutiny of the Streltsi, he sent to the arsenal for a supply of drums, banners, and arms. In the beginning of 1683 we find accounts of his ordering uniform, banners, and wooden cannon. On his eleventh birthday, May 20th, 1683, he was allowed, for the first time, to fire salutes with real guns, under the direction of Simon Sommer, a German artilleryman. After this he was allowed to possess small brass and iron cannon, and a number of drummer-boys, from different regiments, were selected to be his companions.

In July 1683 the secretary to the Swedish embassy gives an account of his reception at the Russian Court, where he was presented to the Tsars. The ambassadors rode into the Kremlin, got off their horses, gave their swords to a servant, went up some steps, and then through passages and rooms with gilded ceilings, till they reached the ante-chamber and the audience-hall, which was covered with Turkey carpets. The boys sat together on a silver throne covered with red cloth. They wore coats of silver embroidered with red and white flowers, and, instead of sceptres, had long golden staves, bent at the end like the pastoral staff of a bishop, set with many precious stones. "The elder drew his cap down over his eyes several times, and, with looks cast down on the floor, sat almost immovable. The younger had a frank and open face, and his young blood rose to his cheeks as often as any one spoke to him. He constantly looked about, and his great beauty and his lively manner—which sometimes brought the Muscovite magnates into confusion—struck all of us so much that had he been an ordinary youth and no imperial personage we would gladly have talked with him."

The secretary tells us that Iván was seventeen and Peter sixteen years old. But at this time he was only eleven, and must therefore have been a fine boy for his age. When the ambassador presented his letters of credence, Iván appeared hardly to understand what was going on, but Peter jumped up off the throne and asked after the health of Charles X. before his brother had time to say a word.

Although Iván was so weak that he could hardly speak, and had to be supported by two chamberlains, and was nearly blind, he was married at the age of eighteen to Prascóvia Sóltykof, by whom he had five daughters, one of whom, Anne, afterwards became Empress. On the other hand, we hear of Peter in 1684 as a bright, merry boy, with charming, affable

manners, with a beauty that won everybody's heart, and a mind which scarcely had its equal.

At this time Peter had two severe illnesses, and the general anxiety which was felt about him was an index of his popularity. At the age of thirteen he was nearly a man, tall and well grown, with a most engaging character. It is admitted by all that Peter was the founder of the Russian army as well as of the Russian fleet, but the stories which are handed down to us about the development of this taste are not always credible. It is certain that the serious reorganisation of the Russian military system was due to the influence of Lefort, with whom Peter did not become acquainted till 1690. However, as a boy he organised some regiments for his own amusement; whether he did this at the age of eleven or at the age of fifteen is not a matter of great importance. His first regiment was organised at the palace of Preobrazhensk, not far from Moscow. This regiment, which still bears its old name, is now the first regiment of the Russian Guards, and the Emperor generally wears its uniform. The first man enrolled in it was one Sergius Bukhvastóf, one of the grooms of the palace, of whom Peter afterwards erected a life-size statue, as the first Russian soldier. Alexander Menshikóf, the beloved friend and favourite of Peter, was also one of the first to join this regiment. The second regiment formed was called Seménofsky, from a village of that name close to Preobrazhensk.

Peter took these matters very seriously, although the Russians of the capital laughed at his proceedings. He performed all the duties of a common soldier, slept in their tents, lived upon their fare, and kept guard with them in turn. He also took long marches with them into the country and camped out at night. The remains of a fort which he built on the banks of the river Yaúza, near Preobrazhensk, have recently

been discovered. The fort took nearly a year to build, and it was inaugurated in the presence of nobles and officials from Moscow. It was called by the German name of Pressburg.

Peter worked more with his hands than with his books—indeed, most of the learning which he afterwards acquired was gained from the necessity of knowing how to perform what he wanted to do. This is the best way of teaching boys whose habits are more active than studious. We are told that at the age of thirty-five he was acquainted with fourteen trades; and some of these he must have acquired very young. Among them were the forging and hammering of iron, the use of the lathe and the printing-press, and the knowledge of book-binding. In 1688 his sister Sophia induced him to attend a council of state, but he did not for a long time take any serious interest in public affairs.

One of the best sources of information about this period is the diary of General Gordon, an officer long in the service of the Tsars, whose journal, written in English, is preserved in the state archives at St. Petersburg. He sent soldiers, drummers, and fifers to swell Peter's regiments, although Basil Golitsyn warned him that it was dangerous to do so without the permission of the boyars. Thus on October 10th, 1688 Gordon tells us that he mustered his regiment and chose out twenty fifers and thirty little drummers to be trained for Peter's use. On November 13th all the drummers of Gordon's regiment were requisitioned for Peter's use, and ten soldiers besides. Peter could not have done all this without the help of foreigners. The colonel of the Preobrazhensky regiment was a Livonian, Von Mengden, and his own physician was a Dutchman, Van der Hulst.

Still more remarkable was the attention he gave to shipbuilding. We are here standing on firmer ground, because he has told the story himself in the preface

which he wrote to the "Maritime Regulations." His right hand in this enterprise was Franz Timmermann, a Dutch merchant, whose acquaintance he made in the following manner. Peter had heard that an instrument was to be found in foreign parts by which distances could be measured without moving from the spot. When Prince Jacob Dolgorúky was starting on his mission to France Peter told him of this instrument, and begged him to bring one back with him. Dolgorúky did not forget his promise, and in May 1688 the bag containing an astrolabe was unpacked.

Unfortunately neither Peter nor his ambassador had any idea how it was to be used. Dolgorúky had forgotten to ask. However, his Dutch doctor, Van der Hulst, suggested an application to his countryman Timmermann, who was an educated man, and had been long settled in Moscow. Happily Timmermann knew how to use the astrolabe, and measured by its means the distance to a neighbouring house. In order to make use of his playthings, Peter had to learn arithmetic and geometry, of which he before knew absolutely nothing ; and the copy-books in which he wrote his lessons are still preserved.

About a month later, in June 1688, Peter was wandering with Timmermann about his estate at Ismaïlovo, when he saw an old building and asked what it was. He was told that it was used as a lumber-room, to contain the property which had belonged to the Boyar Nikíta Romanóf, a cousin of the Tsar Michael Romanóf, the founder of Peter's dynasty. He had the door opened, and in a corner discovered a curious-looking boat. Timmermann told him that it was an English boat, and that it could be made to sail even against the wind. The boat then found is still preserved at St. Petersburg. It is uncertain whether it was made in Russia by Dutch ship-builders in the reign of Alexis, or was presented by the English Queen Elizabeth to Iván the Terrible. It



EUDOXIA (PETER'S FIRST WIFE).

From the original in the Romanof Gallery, Winter Palace, St. Petersburg.

could not be used without repair, and luckily Timmermann remembered the existence of another Dutchman Carsten Brant, who had been invited to Russia in the time of Alexis, and had built a vessel called the *Orel* or *Eagle* for use on the Volga as a ship of war. This had been burnt by the Cossack rebels in 1671.

Thus the bread cast so many years before upon the waters, was now found to some purpose. Brant repaired the boat, made a mast and sail for it, and launched it upon the Yaúza, where he sailed up and down, with and against the wind. Peter jumped in and began to manage the boat himself. The river was narrow and shallow, so the boat was carried overland to a neighbouring lake. This was found to be too small, and Peter determined to try his fortune on Lake Plestchéief, about fifty miles beyond the Tróitsa Monastery. He got permission to go to the Tróitsa Monastery to attend a festival, and then set off at full speed for the lake. But there were no boats there, and it was too far to bring the English boat, so he determined to build one, and returned to Moscow with his head full of plans. At the beginning of July, as soon as St. Peter's Day was over, he set off for the lake with Carsten Brant, and an old comrade of his named Kort. They worked hard for a month and more, but Peter was obliged to return before any boat could be built. He left the workmen behind him, bidding them have a boat ready by the following spring.

Once at Moscow, Peter found plenty to occupy him. The condition of foreign affairs was much disturbed, and things were not much better at home. Besides, he was growing so big and strong that it was determined that he should marry. The bride chosen was Eudoxia Lopúkhin, of a good old Russian family. She was about three years older than Peter, and was said to be pretty, quiet, and modest. There was

nothing remarkable about her, and the marriage could hardly be called a happy one. It took place on January 27th, 1689, Peter then being eighteen years and a half old. The fruit of it were three sons, Alexis, Alexander, and Paul. Peter II., the son of Alexis, succeeded his grandfather, but the present Tsars are the offspring of Peter's second marriage. Two months after the wedding he set off for the lake, and found, to his great delight, two boats nearly completed. However, he was again recalled, and did not return for two years, during which time many things had happened.

CHAPTER V.

THE RUPTURE WITH SOPHIA.

IT had been evident to all acute observers that the present condition of things could not long continue. Iván and Peter were the two legitimate Tsars. Both were now married and independent. Sophia was legally only regent, but the country was governed in her name by means of her favourite Basil Golítsyn. Peter was on the best of terms with his brother, who was, in his turn, devotedly attached to him; but he was not likely to submit to the anomalous *régime* of a woman and a favourite. This state of things might have continued if the Government had been successfully conducted. But serious disasters were accumulating, and clouds were gathering round the state. Under these circumstances a catastrophe was inevitable.

The neighbours whom Russia had to face were, in the North, the Swedes and the Poles, in the South, the Tartars and the Turks. At the present day one of the chief objects of Russian diplomacy is, if not the possession of Constantinople, at least a free access to the Mediterranean, and a command of the Black Sea. Two hundred years ago her eyes were also cast in the same direction; and it will always be a disputed question whether Peter pursued a wise policy in turning his arms from the South to the North, giving up the chance of an Empire with Constantinople for its port, for the satisfaction of crushing Charles XII. and

founding St. Petersburg. Sophia certainly had no aim of this kind. She desired to live at peace with the Swedes and the Poles. She even gave up the claims which Russia might have to Carelia, and was content with the acknowledgment of the title of Tsar, and of free Greek worship in the Swedish province.

The settlement with Poland was now difficult, because the possession of the province of Little Russia, and of the important city of Kíef were at stake. The details of this dispute do not concern the life of Peter. Suffice it to say that at the beginning of 1686 a magnificent Polish embassy made its appearance in Moscow. The negotiations lasted for seven weeks, and were conducted with the greatest ability by Golítsyn himself. They were in danger again and again of being broken off, and the Polish Ambassadors made preparations for their departure.

At last the "Everlasting Peace," as it was called, was concluded on April 21st. Poland surrendered her rights over Kíef, and Russia paid an indemnity of a hundred and forty-six thousand rubles. She also engaged to attack the Crimea in the following year. It is said that John Sobieski, the King of Poland, ratified the treaty with tears in his eyes. On the other hand, Sophia proclaimed to the Russian people that no treaty in their history had been more advantageous and more honorable. She now stood at the summit of her power, and she assumed the title of Autocrat by the side of her brothers.

This boastful attitude was soon to suffer a sudden change. The attempt to conquer the Crimea is one of the most melancholy incidents in Russian history. Golítsyn undertook the command in 1687, with great reluctance. He knew that in departing from Moscow he was leaving many enemies behind him. We have an accurate account of his misfortunes in his letters to his friend Shaklovítý. An army of a hundred thousand men was slowly collected, and he was

joined in May by the Hetman of the Cossacks with fifty thousand more. Many of the troops expected never appeared at all. Military organisation could hardly be said to exist. The advance did not begin until the summer heat made it almost impossible. The army was dispirited. The nobles who commanded the cavalry were the bitter foes of Golitsyn. They even arrayed their horses and themselves in mourning, as a presage of the disasters which they knew were inevitable. Golitsyn had to write home for more complete power.

The march was encumbered by an exorbitant amount of baggage. The army had to advance in a squad nearly two miles long and one mile broad. Golitsyn took seven weeks to cover a hundred miles, although he declared that he was using his utmost speed. The Cossacks took no interest in the war; their sympathies were rather with the Tartars than the Russians. The worst calamity of all was that the grass of the steppe was burnt up before them as they advanced. No one knew who did it. It may have been the Tartars, but some accused the Cossacks, and some Golitsyn himself. It may perhaps have been an accident, but it proved the ruin of the campaign: there was no fodder for the horses, and sickness broke out in the army.

At last, by the side of a stream about a hundred and fifty miles from Perekóp, Golitsyn determined to return. They had not even seen the enemy. The generals were received in honour, as if they were returning from a brilliant victory. Nothing was said of the forty or fifty thousand men who had been sacrificed. Golitsyn received a gold chain and three hundred ducats, and all the officers were presented with medals. The campaign was spoken of as a splendid victory, and the shameful retreat as a glorious triumph.

The next year was spent in preparing for the

second campaign. Precautions were taken to begin it earlier in the year. Golitsyn set out at the end of February with an army of a hundred and twelve thousand men. Mazeppa, the new Hetman, who was afterwards to prove a traitor, joined with his Cossacks. The steppe was not set on fire, plenty of water was found, and in the middle of May Golitsyn was in the neighbourhood of Perekóp. Here he was assailed by the Tartar troops. Perekóp was reached on May 20th. Golitsyn had supposed, as Napoleon imagined afterwards at Moscow, that the possession of Perekóp would put an end to the war, and that the Tartars would be only too delighted to sue for peace. He found, however, that his position was untenable, that he would soon be forced to retreat, and the Tartars were reluctant to come to terms. He therefore had to return without either having captured Perekóp or made peace with the Tartars. We possess contemporary accounts of this expedition in the diaries of Gordon and in the letters of Lefort. Gordon commanded the rear guard, and he tells us that the Tartars pursued the Russians eagerly for eight days, the troops suffering grievously for want of water. Lefort reports that thirty-five thousand Russians were lost, twenty thousand killed, and fifteen thousand wounded: seventy cannon also disappeared, and all the material of war. Some of these cannon were afterwards recovered, in the reign of the Empress Anne.

Golitsyn arrived at Moscow on July 1st, and was received with honour by Sophia and Iván, who prepared to thank him as before, and to reward his troops. But Peter, who had a cooler and sounder judgment, refused his consent, and the honours given to the army were delayed for a month on this account. Golitsyn received a gold cup, a robe of cloth-of-gold, lined with sable, a large sum of money, and an estate; and his officers were recompensed in a similar manner. When, however, they went out to Preobrazhensk

to pay their respects to Peter, and to thank him, he refused to receive them. "At which some were tronbled," says Gordon, in his diary, "and some were not, because they thought it was better to take the bitt and the buffet with it; . . . for it was now seen that an open breach was imminent, which would probably result in the greatest bitterness."

The ill-feeling between Peter and Sophia had been gradually growing. Each of them felt the position unsatisfactory, and both desired to make their own secure. On May 9th, 1686, Sophia appeared at a church festival openly with her brothers, which was contrary to all law and precedent. It is said that she sounded the Streltsi with regard to the possibility of her coronation, but their answer was unfavourable, and the step was not taken. The life of Natalia was in danger. Basil Golitsyn is believed to have said that it would have been well if she had perished with her brothers. Sophia had a picture of herself painted in royal robes, with a crown on her head, a sceptre in one hand and a globe in the other. The inscription round it describes her as *samodershia*—that is, autocrat, or self-ruler. In the background is the double eagle, and around are medallions of the seven cardinal virtues.

On the other hand, Baron Keller, who was Dutch Resident at the Russian Court, writes in July 1688, when Peter was just sixteen years old: "The young Tsar attracts great attention, since his good sense and his knowledge of military affairs are as remarkable as his physical development. Even now he is taller than all the nobles of his Court. It is felt certain that this young prince will soon be admitted to the exercise of sovereign power. When this alteration takes place, many things will take a different direction." It was quite certain that Peter would not put up with a triple government.

After the failure of the second Crimean campaign,

the tension between brother and sister naturally became more serious. Gordon tells us that the troops returning from the Crimea did not celebrate Peter's name-day on June 29th, 1689. On July 8th there was a solemn procession to the Kazan Church. Peter requested that Sophia would not appear at it, but she took a holy picture and joined the procession. Peter left the procession in anger, and went off to Preobrazhensk. When Peter appeared in the capital a few weeks later, Sophia surrounded herself with a guard of fifty soldiers. We have seen how Peter behaved with respect to the honours proposed for the returning army. Moscow and Preobrazhensk were now in arms against each other.

On August 7th a large number of Streltsi were assembled in the Kremlin. They may have been intended for an attack on Preobrazhensk, or perhaps to protect Sophia from an assault of Peter's regiments. Two days later Peter asked his sister why she had assembled so many troops, and she replied that she was on the point of undertaking a pilgrimage, and that the troops were to accompany her. This was the beginning of the end. Gordon narrates that on the night of August 7th, news was suddenly brought to Peter that an attack was to be made upon him by the party of Sophia. He jumped out of bed and rushed to the stable without even putting on his boots. Here he had a horse saddled, and rode to the nearest wood, where his clothes were brought to him. As soon as he had dressed he rode, with such companions as he could collect, to the Tróitsa Monastery where he arrived at six o'clock on the morning of August 8th, very tired. When he got into his room he threw himself on the bed and burst into tears, telling the abbot what had occurred, and demanding protection and assistance. During the day, bodyguards and other adherents arrived, and during the next night welcome news came on from Moscow,

where the sudden journey of the Tsar had caused great dismay. This was the Hegira of Peter, and the foundation of his independent reign. The monastery of Tróitsa was a safe place of refuge, as it was well fortified. We have seen that Sophia had used it in 1682 for a similar purpose.

There were now two sovereigns in the country, and the question was which would win. The struggle lasted for several weeks, from the beginning of August to the middle of September. Peter's chief adviser at this time was Boris Golitsyn, a cousin of Basil. Gordon tells us that he directed everything at Tróitsa. Some of the more clear-sighted people saw that Peter must win in the end, and began, like rats, to leave the sinking ship. One of the colonels of the Streltsi got himself summoned to Tróitsa, and was allowed to go there with fifty men. When, however, Peter sent orders to the other colonels to repair to Tróitsa with ten men each, they hesitated, and Sophia said that she would cut off the head of any one who attempted to go. Sophia despatched a number of distinguished people to her brother, begging him to return to Moscow. Amongst these were the Boyar Troekúrof, Prince Prosorófsky, and at last the Patriarch himself, who, once there, thought it wise to remain; and his adhesion gave fresh strength to Peter's cause. At last the Streltsi yielded to Peter's reiterated commands to proceed to Tróitsa. They were received by the Tsar and the Patriarch, and swore allegiance to Peter's Government.

Finally, Sophia came to the conclusion that the best thing for her to do was to go to Tróitsa herself. She set out with a holy image of the Saviour, accompanied by Basil Golitsyn, Shaklovítý, and a guard of Streltsi. When she arrived at the village of Vozdvizhenskoe, the very place in which Havánsky and his son had been executed, Peter's chamberlain met her with orders not to proceed. She at first said that she

should certainly go on, but on being assured by one of her adherents that if she persisted the consequences might be unpleasant, she reluctantly returned to Moscow.

No sooner had she come back than a message arrived from Peter, with orders that Shaklovity, Medvédief, and others, should be arrested and sent to Tróitsa for trial. Medvédief immediately fled, and attempted to reach the Polish frontier. Shaklovity also prepared for flight. A saddled horse was standing at the back gate of the palace, and a carriage at the Monastery of the Virgin, about five miles from Moscow. At the last moment he changed his mind, because he feared to be seized by the Streltsi, whose feelings were turning more and more to Peter. Basil Golitsyn, although nothing had been said with regard to him, lost courage, and betook himself to his villa in the neighbourhood of the city. The enthusiasm of the Streltsi for Peter became still more marked. Gordon saw them standing in crowds at the door of the palace, to prevent the flight of those who had been denounced by the Tsar. At the same time, no one in the capital yet dared openly to espouse Peter's cause.

Sophia continued to make long speeches to the Streltsi, to promise them rewards, and to give them *vodka*. Gordon admired the courage, the energy, and the eloquence of the Princess, who did everything she could to save her cause. She ascribed the whole movement to the bad counsellors of her brother, who wished to kill Iván and herself. Peter treated the Tróitsa Monastery as the centre of government ; he ordered all money and supplies to be paid to him there. Sophia immediately gave counter orders that everything should be brought, as heretofore, to Moscow. There was considerable danger of a civil war. Peter's Streltsi were anxious to march upon the Kremlin, and to capture the traitors by main force. His advisers, on the other hand, were desirous

to avoid bloodshed. Boris Golítsyn sent a letter to his cousin Basil to persuade him to come to Tróitsa peacefully, while there was yet time; he was sure to be well received by Peter. Honour, however, forbade him to desert the cause of Sophia.

Everything now depended upon the conduct of the foreign officers, whose troops formed a considerable part of the Russian army. They were distinguished soldiers, men of high character, like Gordon, who had no great personal interests to serve, and might be considered to be impartial. Some of the inhabitants of the German suburb, in which the foreigners lived, betook themselves to the monastery, and Gordon seized the opportunity of sending a message that he and others would be glad to come if they knew that their presence would be agreeable. Before this arrival the same idea had occurred to Peter's advisers.

On September 4th an order was brought to the German suburb, giving an account of the supposed conspiracy, and ordering all officers into whose hands the order should come to repair at once to Tróitsa, fully armed and on horseback. This order was brought to Gordon unopened. He summoned all the foreign generals and officers to his house and unsealed the packet in their presence. They determined at first to communicate its contents to Basil Golítsyn, saying at the same time that it was as much as their heads were worth to disobey. Golítsyn wished to communicate the order to Sophia and Iván, but Gordon replied that he, for one, was determined to go. The other foreign officers followed his example. They set off immediately, and this decided the contest.

In the meantime the Streltsi were arresting the persons whom Peter had proscribed. They pressed Sophia to give up Shaklovítý. She hesitated for a long time, but was at last compelled to give in. He

was taken from the palace chapel, in which he had been concealed, received the Eucharist, and was sent to Tróitsa on September 7th. In a similar manner Natalia Narýshkin had been forced to surrender her brother Iván by the pressure of Sophia in 1682.

Shaklovíty, on his arrival at Tróitsa, was immediately tortured with the knout. He made a confession of hostility to Peter, but said that there had been no conspiracy against his life, although the possible murder of Natalia and her family had been mentioned in conversation. He was beheaded on September 11th. Gordon, who saw much of Peter in these days, informs us that his death was against Peter's wish, who was in favour of milder measures. But Shaklovíty was hated by the *boyars*, so that his punishment was not so much an act of justice as of vengeance.

Basil Golítsyn had wandered about in an undecided manner, now in his villa, and again in Moscow, until at last he determined to go to Tróitsa on September 7th. At first he was not allowed to enter the monastery, and when he did so he was placed under arrest. Gordon visited him, having been very intimate with him for several years, and found him bowed down with sorrow. Two days later his sentence was read to him. He was banished, with his family, to Kargópol, in the extreme north of Russia. The charges against him were that he had grossly mismanaged the Crimean campaign, and that he had desired to raise Sophia to the rank of an independent sovereign. His life was prolonged in penury till 1714, being spent first at Yarénsk and then at Pinéga.

This sentence was much milder than was expected. No doubt he owed his life to the influence and intercession of his cousin Boris. Gordon remarks in his journal that it was well known that Golítsyn had been the main support of Sophia's party; that he must have been privy to any plots which might have

been formed for the overthrow of Peter or his adherents ; and that he would certainly have had to pay a severe penalty had not Boris been reluctant that his family should be disgraced by the torture or execution of one of its members. By this intercession Boris increased the hatred of the people in general, and of Peter's friends in particular, especially of Natalia, Peter's mother. Pains were taken to poison Peter's mind against him, but they had no effect, and he remained a friend and counsellor of the youthful Tsar.

Medvédief had escaped to a monastery on the Polish frontier, but was arrested and sent to Tróitsa. Here he was tortured, degraded from his orders, and imprisoned in a monastery. In 1691 he was again arrested, owing to some other disclosures which had been made with regard to him, tortured with fire and hot irons, and executed. Some of his writings were burnt as heretical. It is probable, from the severity with which he was treated, that he was suspected of aiming at the Patriarchate.

It now only remained to deal with Sophia. Peter wrote from Tróitsa a letter to his brother Iván, saying that they two were the people's rulers, and that nothing had ever been said about the rule of a third person ; that Sophia's usurpation of the government had been the cause of misfortune both to land and people ; that she had conspired against Peter's mother and against himself ; that she must not be allowed to reign any longer—it would be a disgrace to the two Tsars, who were now of full age. He asked to be allowed to depose all unjust judges, and to appoint just ones in their place. He concluded by a determination to do everything in concert with his brother, whom he loved as a father.

In this letter, which was written between September 8th and 12th, there was not a word about the fate in store for the regent. Soon after this, Peter sent

a *boyar* to Moscow to request Sophia to leave the capital and to retire to the Novodevítsky convent. She made every excuse for delay, and did not leave the capital till the end of September. She was well treated in this honourable captivity. She had plenty of servants and a large suite of rooms was prepared for her reception. She lived a comfortable existence, but she was not allowed to leave the convent walls, and her female relations were only permitted to visit her on the great festivals of the Church. In 1698, after the revolt of the Streltsi, Sophia was compelled to become a nun, and she died in 1704.

The independent reign of Peter may be said to have begun on September 12th, 1698, because on that day he appointed the new officials and judges. He did not, however, reach Moscow till October 6th. He first visited the Cathedral of the Assumption, where he was received by his brother Iván with effusive signs of affection. He was then arrayed in robes of state, and, standing at the top of the Red Staircase, was acknowledged by the people as their lawful ruler.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST YEARS OF PETER'S REIGN.

IT is a curious fact that for some time after these events Peter did not take any important part in public affairs. He confined himself to training his soldiers and to boat-building, and left the higher matters of state to his counsellors, of whom Leo Narýshkin, his uncle, was the chief. Indeed, events happened at the outset of his reign with which he could have had nothing to do, and of which he must have highly disapproved. There was a great outburst of fanaticism against foreigners.

Peter lived at this time in the closest intimacy with General Gordon, whose friendship must have been a godsend to him. His military experience, large knowledge of the world, and general culture, had a deep effect on the mind of the young Tsar. His companionship became indispensable to him, and he saw him every day. But the Patriarch Joachim, who was now all the stronger by the fall of his rival Medvédiéf, and was very powerful at the Court, did not approve of these proceedings. He had, indeed, objected to the employment of foreigners in the army, and ascribed the misfortunes of the Crimean campaigns to the presence of heretics in the camp. He had especially opposed the engagement of Gordon himself.

About six months after the revolution, Gordon was invited by Peter to dine at the Court, to celebrate the birth of his son Alexis. The Patriarch protested, and

the invitation was withdrawn, but on the following day Peter invited Gordon to dine with him in the country, and rode back with him, talking to him the whole way.

The Patriarch was not alone in his prejudices. There were many to support him in his hatred of foreigners. All letters of foreigners were liable to be opened at the frontier. Gordon advised his son not to enter the Russian service unless matters were altered. At this time all foreigners who entered the service of the Tsar were compelled to remain in it till the day of their death. In connection with this same order of ideas the Jesuits, who had been favoured by Basil Golitsyn, were now expelled from Russia, and Quirinns Kuhlmann, a mystical religious teacher of blameless character, was burnt alive in the Red Square of the Kremlin, four days before the arrival of Peter.

The Patriarch Joachim died on March 17th, 1690. He left behind him a kind of political testament, which has a special importance because it was issued at the very time when Peter was depending upon foreigners for his education, and just before he undertook his travels in the West. He besought the Tsar not to allow the "accursed heretics" any command in the army, because to do so would call down the wrath of Heaven. He is especially hard upon the Protestants who despise the worship of the Virgin Mary, and of pictures. He entreats his sovereign to consider the preservation of the true faith as the first virtue of a ruler. He is to avoid all intercourse with Latins, Lutherans, Calvinists and Tartars. The churches at present assigned to the worship of foreigners are to be destroyed, as meeting places for the work of the devil. All foreign influence, every attempt to introduce foreign religion or foreign manners, is to be punished with death. All discussion about Church or religious matters is to be strictly forbidden. No foreigner or heretic is to hold any office, foreign dress

is to be carefully excluded, the safety and success of the state depends upon the exclusion of all foreign elements. We must admire all the more the strength of mind and energy of Peter when he had such obstacles as these to encounter at the outset of his career.

Peter's mother Natalia shared to some extent the views of the Patriarch. Gordon tells us in his diary that on August 27th, 1690, the name-day of the mother Tsaritsa, when the foreigners went to pay their respects at Court, even the Russian merchants were admitted before them, and were handsomely feasted in Natalia's private apartment, whereas the foreigners went away empty. This insult was felt all the more bitterly because Peter, at this very time, was eating and drinking every day with the heretics, was working with them, and spending all his spare time with them.

After the Patriarch's death it was necessary to choose a successor, and Peter favoured the candidature of Marcellus, Metropolitan of Pskof, an excellent, well-educated man, and a friend of progress. Natalia and the Church party, on the other hand, supported Adrian, Metropolitan of Kazán. Gordon says "the greatest fault they had to lay to the charge of Marcellus was that he had too much learning, and as they feared and said he would favour the Catholic and other religions, to which purpose the Abbot of the Spasky Monastery had given in a writing to the Queen Dowager, accusing him on many points, and even of heresy."

Peter was so disgusted at the choice of Adrian that he retired with Iván to Koloménskoe. We find in an account of Livonia published in London in 1701, and written by one Blomberg, an amusing anecdote of Peter, that he told a story how, when the Patriarch in Moscow was dead, he deigned to fill that place with a learned man, that had been a traveller, who spoke Latin, Italian, and French; but the Russians

petitioned him, in a tumultuous manner, not to set such a man over them, alleging these reasons : (1) because he spoke barbarous languages ; (2) because his beard was not big enough for a Patriarch ; and (3) because his coachman sat upon the box seat, and not upon the horses, as was usual.

Gordon himself had to complain that his position at Court caused him great expense ; that he had been promised large rewards, but had received very little ; but that, if the young Tsar assumed the government, he had no doubt that everything would be set right. It was at this time very doubtful whether Peter would win in the struggle between progress and reaction, and the fact that he did so is due to the influence of his powerful personality.

At this time the foreigners who lived in Moscow were settled in a suburb outside the town, to the north-east. It was an agreeable place of residence. The houses were made of wood, and were surrounded by gardens. The number of foreigners in Russia at this time was estimated at eighteen thousand, the greater part of which dwelt in Moscow. Living apart by themselves, they kept up their traditions, wore their own clothing, read their own books, spoke their own languages, although they were of course acquainted with Russian. They clung to their own methods of education, and their own religion. Thus the German suburb was the nucleus of a higher civilisation.

As the German suburb lay on the road between Moscow and Preobrazhensk, Peter must have frequently passed through it, and would naturally converse with those with whom he was acquainted. But it was not till the period which we have now reached—the year 1690—that his relations with the foreign colony became intimate and constant. Indeed, at one time he seems almost to have lived in the suburb, and for a long period his most intimate and trusted friends were foreigners.

The chief of these was General Patrick Gordon. He was now fifty-five years old, and was a man of remarkable gifts. He was born in Scotland, and was a Royalist and a Catholic. He left his home early, to enter the Swedish service: from that he passed to the Polish, and in 1660 to the Russian. He held a position of trust and honour under the Tsars Alexis and Theodore. But he was always desiring to return to his own country, and was only prevented by the rule which forbade all foreigners to leave Russia when they had once settled there. He played an important part in the campaign of Tchigirin, and was long governor of Kief in Little Russia. He made both campaigns in the Crimea with Basil Golitsyn, with whom he stood upon a footing of extreme intimacy. He occupied a position of great influence in the German suburb, as head of the Jacobite Colony, which consisted of English and Scotch. He could hardly be called a learned man, but he was well educated. He took great interest in politics, and was bitter against William III. He was a friend of the Jesuits and an ardent advocate of Catholicism. He was in constant correspondence with persons abroad, and every post-day sent off one or two dozen letters. He was a personal friend of Charles II. and James II., and knew Queen Christina of Sweden. He had books, maps and scientific instruments, sent to him from England, and kept himself acquainted with any new discoveries which were announced in the Royal Society. He suffered from chronic indigestion, which put an end to his life in 1699; but this malady did not damp his energy in writing or pursuing his profession as military engineer. There is no doubt that he was a complete master of Russian, and that he was popular in Russian circles, except with the extreme fanatics. At this time he was chiefly employed in making fireworks with the Tsar at Preobrazhensk.

The relations between Gordon and the Tsar were of the most intimate character. Peter frequently took him with him to visit friends ; on one occasion to the Persian Ambassador to see a pair of lions which he had brought over as a present. With Peter he designed new kinds of cannon, new kinds of rockets and of bombs. He took an equal interest in Peter's ship-building, and indeed, went so often to the lake on which it took place that he had a house built for himself on the shore. He once accompanied the Tsar as far as Archangel. They shared together their joys and sorrows. Their revels sometimes lasted far into the night, to the detriment of Gordon's health ; but if Peter were in trouble or out of spirits it was with Gordon that he found comfort. If Gordon was sick, Peter nursed him and brought him medicine. When Peter lost his mother, Gordon was his most successful consoler. Under Gordon's influence the Tsar frequently attended marriages and funerals in the German suburb. In old days no one who had been present at a funeral might present himself before the Tsar for three days ; now Peter himself was seen walking behind the coffin. He even sometimes assisted at Catholic services. This disregard of ancient prejudices was the cause of considerable unpopularity.

Francis Lefort was of a different type from Gordon. He was now about thirty-seven years of age, and had been fifteen years in Russia. He was sprung from a distinguished family of Geneva, and had left that city because the strict Calvinism of its society was little to his taste. He had an affectionate, sympathetic character, great social qualities, open and unselfish, but an inordinate love of pleasure. He had not, up to this time, made much of a position for himself, but was well received in the society of wealthy merchants and distinguished diplomats. He had secured the protection of Prince Basil Golitsyn. At

this time he held the rank of colonel. He had a house in the German suburb, and was married.

Lefort was not a very serious character ; he was not very learned or very clever. But he had a warm heart, great devotion to his friends, and a cheerfulness and good health which never failed him. Gordon was the friend of Peter's sterner moments, Lefort of his lighter hours. To one the Tsar went for instruction and advice, to the other for amusement and affection. Gordon was a man to the backbone, Lefort had something feminine about him. Probably Peter was never quite so intimate with Gordon as he was with Lefort, but Gordon had far more influence over his career. Lefort had no desire to return to his country, and by degrees became a thorough Russian. He was equally indifferent to religion and to politics. We possess a large number of Lefort's letters to Peter. They are full of affectionate expressions, but rarely speak of anything serious. They are generally concerned with the manner in which the friends shall best amuse themselves.

Unfortunately not a single letter of Peter's to Lefort is extant. Lefort began by being the courtier, the favourite, of Peter, but he ended by becoming his dearest and most unselfish friend, who never thought of his own interests when those of Peter were at stake. Lefort's deeper influence belongs to a later period than Gordon's. He is supposed to have suggested the campaigns of 1695 and 1696, and to have inspired Peter with the desire to travel in the West in the two years which succeeded. He certainly had an extraordinary power of allaying Peter's passionate wrath in important crises. Peter is reported to have said at his funeral : " On whom can I now depend ? He was the only one that was true to me."

The society of the German suburb was a great contrast to that of the Kremlin, and at the same time

it was much healthier. The conversation included foreign politics and the events of the day. Ladies were present at the entertainments, which was not the case in Russian circles. The drink was deep, but the liquor consumed was wine, much more wholesome than the spirits drunk at Russian dinners. Dinner was usually served at noon, and the feast was often prolonged till late in the night, sometimes even till the next morning. Peter, when he honoured his friends with his presence, sometimes brought with him eighty or ninety guests, and a hundred servants, so that the burden of entertainment was very onerous. Lefort's means could not stand this strain, so Peter used to pay for him, and indeed built him a house, with a banqueting-hall capable of containing fifteen hundred guests, which formed a sort of club in which Peter might see his friends.

Sometimes Peter would go round masquerading and singing at Christmas time ; and every one had to wear the dress which he ordered. After the performance the hat was sent round for contributions, and woe betide the man who gave niggardly. When Filadilof, one of the richest merchants in Moscow, only rewarded Peter with two rubles, the Tsar sent off to his house a hundred poor people, with orders that a ruble a-piece should be given them. The next house they visited profited by experience, and gave a present of a thousand rubles to the choir. Dancing, singing, and theatricals filled up the evening, and especially the "Grandpapa" dance, of which Peter was particularly fond.

The intercourse with the German suburb, in which Peter at this time might almost be said to live, placed before his eyes the pattern of a higher culture which he knew to be necessary for Russia if she were to attain a leading position in Europe. The passage from the Kremlin to the Sloboda, as it was called, in 1690, is perhaps even more important than Peter's journey to Europe seven years later. It was certainly a station

on the road, a half-way house between East and West. It closes the old period in the history of Russia, and opens a new era in its development. It had an important effect on all the future history of the East of Europe.

A large number of the inhabitants of the German suburb were Dutch, as there was at this time a close connection between Russia and Holland. Baron Keller, the third star in Peter's firmament of friendship, belonged to this nationality. He was the Dutch Ambassador at the Russian Court, and was the fittest person to instruct Peter in the mysteries of foreign politics, and especially in the causes of the antagonism which was now breaking out between William III. and Louis XIV. He must also have frequently represented to Peter the necessity of a strong fleet for the protection of commerce. By the advice of Keller, the Burgo-master of Amsterdam took pains to excite Peter's interest in the commerce of the far East, in China and Persia, and sent him a memoir upon the subject. Peter read it with the greatest attention, and took up the subject of commercial development with as much zeal as he had previously given to the formation of an army and to the building of a fleet. The Dutch began to feel that the future of the North and the East of Europe was bound up with Peter's reign, and this was shown by the great anxiety exhibited by Keller and his countrymen when Peter was seriously ill in 1692.

Another important friend of Peter's was Andrew Vinus, the son of a Dutch merchant, but born in Russia, and a member of the Orthodox Church. Vinus had been sent on diplomatic missions to various countries ; had translated foreign books into Russian ; had written a work on geography ; and was now postmaster-general. No one was better informed as to what was going on in foreign countries. Peter made good use of his knowledge about mining and ship-building ; he em-

ployed him to translate Dutch works into Russian, to provide gunpowder and cannon, and to construct a manufactory of arms. At a later period Vinius founded a school for mariners.

During all this time, and for some years later, Peter took very little interest in public affairs. He grew large and strong, but he thought as a boy and acted as a boy. His time was divided between somewhat boisterous amusements, mechanical investigations, and mimic soldiering with Gordon, and boat-building with him and others. He did not care even for riding or for field sports. At the Carnival of 1690, Peter, in honour of the birth of his son Alexis, gave an exhibition of fireworks, some of which he had made himself. These fireworks were attended with some danger. On this occasion a five-pound rocket, instead of bursting in the air, came down on a man's head and killed him on the spot. An explosion of gunpowder, at one time, wounded Timmermann, and killed three workmen. Peter was laid up with wounds received in this manner for nearly three months, and General Gordon had his face so badly burnt that he kept his bed for a week.

At the end of November 1691 Peter went, after an absence of two years, to Lake Plestchéief, and remained there for a fortnight. In 1692 he visited the place four times, staying on two occasions more than a month. He occupied himself in building a ship, and was with difficulty persuaded to return to Moscow to receive the Persian ambassador. In August 1692 he succeeded in persuading his mother, wife, and sister, to go to Pereyaslávl, a village about a mile and a half from the lake. Here the Court stayed for a month.

From November 1692 to February 1693 Peter was again so seriously ill that his life was despaired of. Terrible indeed would have been the consequences if he had died. The Tsaritsa Sophia would have

come to the throne, and all the friends and adherents of Peter would have been in danger of their lives. It is said that, in fear of this, Boris Golitsyn and Apráxin had horses ready to fly the country in case of need. The illness was brought on by hard work and exposure, as well as by habits of intemperance, in which, bad as they were, Peter was probably not worse than the majority of his countrymen.

It is said that he never was the same man after this attack. He was subject to fits of melancholy, he had convulsive movements of the muscles, and was liable to sudden outbursts of violent passion which were difficult to allay.

After the Carnival of 1693 Peter went again to Plestchéief, where he stayed for six weeks. He visited it again in May. He then left it for twenty-five years, going to it in 1722 on the road to Persia. He found that the ships were rotten and neglected, and ordered the remains of them to be preserved. This was not done, and a single boat now remains, the survivor of Peter's projected fleet. Larger ideas now occupied his mind. Keller reports of him that he was now beginning to think of commerce as well as war. Still, his warlike propensities were not so damped that he could not rejoice heartily in the victory of William III. over the French at La Hogue. Peter had the original despatch translated, and Keller tells us that when he had read it "his Tsarish Majesty, leaping up and shouting for joy, ordered his new ships to fire a salute."

CHAPTER VII.

ARCHANGEL.

IN the account of his naval experiences, which forms the introduction to Peter's "Maritime Regulations" he says: "For some years I had the full satisfaction of my desires on Lake Pereyaslávl, but at last it got too narrow for me. I then went to the Kúbensky lake, but that was too shallow. I then decided to see the open sea, and often begged the permission of my mother to go to Archangel. For a long time she forbade me so dangerous a journey, but at last, seeing my great desire and unchangeable longing, allowed it in spite of herself." At the same time she made her son promise that he would not go upon the sea, but only look at it from the shore.

Peter set out from Moscow on July 1st, 1693, with a suite of a hundred persons, including Lefort, his private doctor, Van der Hulst, and many of his private friends. Besides this, he had with him a priest, eight choristers, two dwarfs, forty Streltsi, and ten of his bodyguard. The journey was made by road to Vológda, where Peter had the opportunity of remarking the neatness and convenience of the foreign suburb. From Vológda he proceeded by water in a huge painted barge down the rivers Súkhon and Dvína, on the right bank of which Archangel is situated. In Archangel the foreigners occupied a prominent position as shippers and merchants; here also there was a foreign quarter, with a reformed church. It was an important link

of communication between Russia and the rest of Europe, and place of departure for travellers and merchandise.

Peter found that the little yacht, named the *St. Peter*, had been built for him, and the day after his arrival he went on board. Some days afterwards he sailed out to accompany some English and Dutch vessels which were going northwards, and had nearly reached the Polar ocean before he returned. He had been absent five days.

Natalia wrote pressing letters for her son to return, and he promised to do so ; but in fact, more important matters were occupying his attention. Archangel was now alive with business. A fair was held there at the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, in the middle of August. Ships from England, Holland, Hamburg, and Bremen, filled the river, laden with foreign goods, and barges brought Russian products down the Dvina—hemp, grain, potash, tar, tallow, leather, isinglass and caviare. Peter could meet here merchants of every nationality, and see commerce of every kind. He naturally lamented that all the carrying trade was in the hands of foreigners, and that the Russians had no ships of their own. Attempts to provide them had been made, but they were foiled by the jealousy of those merchants who had the trade in their hands. To remedy this defect, Peter appointed his friend Apráxin as governor of Archangel, and ordered him to get two ships ready which should sail under the Russian flag. He was afraid to send them to England or Holland, where rivalry was too powerful, so eventually they were despatched to France ; but they were obliged to sail under the Dutch flag, and one of them was afterwards confiscated by the French.

Besides these occupations, Peter inspected the various industries of Archangel, and practised some of his many trades. He made a chandelier of walrus-teeth, which now hangs over his tomb in the Cathedral of

St. Peter and St. Paul, and did much carving in wood and bone, as well as forging in iron. He mixed with the foreign suburb much on the same footing as he had been accustomed to at Moscow. Also he attended service in the Church of Saint Elias, where he read the epistle, and sang in the choir with his deep bass voice. He did not return to Moscow until the beginning of October, having been absent exactly three months.

Here, on January 25th, 1694, Peter's mother, the Tsaritsa Natalia, died, after a few days' illness, at the age of forty-two. Even at this solemn moment Peter found himself in conflict with ancient prejudices. When the Tsaritsa's illness became dangerous, Peter was summoned from Preobrazhensk to the Kremlin, and went naturally in the foreign riding clothes which he was then wearing. He was severely rebuked by the Patriarch; but Peter told him that he ought to have something better to do, as head of the Church, than to meddle with the business of tailors. We read the following entry in Gordon's diary:—

“His Majesty had promised to come to me to a farewell supper and ball. I went to the palace two hours before daybreak, but did not find His Majesty, on account of the evident danger in which his mother was. He had taken leave of her and had gone back to his house at Preobrazhensk, whither I hastened, and found him in the highest degree melancholy and dejected. Towards eight o'clock came the news that the Tsaritsa was dead.”

Peter was deeply affected. For days he could see no one without bursting into a flood of tears. He never forgot his mother, but his sister Natalia, who had more sympathy with modern ideas, to some extent supplied her place.

On May 1st, 1694, the Tsar set out again for Archangel, two months earlier than he had in the previous year. He took with him a very large com-

pany—about three hundred people—Gordon being one of the number. They travelled faster than on the previous occasion, and reached Archangel on May 18th. Peter lived in the same house which he had occupied the year before. After visiting the Church of St. Elias and returning thanks for his safe arrival, Peter inspected a ship which was building and which was launched on May 20th, the Tsar knocking away the first prop with his own hands.

He was now able to carry out the visit to the Solovétsky Monastery which he had planned the year before. He started on his birthday, May 30th, in his little yacht, the *St. Peter*, taking with him the Archbishop Athanasius. The account of Peter's behaviour on this occasion is a favourite narrative in Russian school-books. When they were about eighty miles from Archangel a heavy gale arose, and the tiny ship was in the greatest danger. The sails were carried away, the waves dashed over the ship, and the sailors were in despair. All fell on their knees and began to pray, while the Archbishop administered the Sacrament.

Peter received the Sacrament with the others, but stood firmly at the helm, with countenance unmoved. His calmness and entire freedom from fear eventually revived the courage of the sailors, and at last the pilot summoned resolution to tell the Tsar that their only hope of safety lay in running into the Únskaya Gulf, or otherwise they would be dashed to pieces on the rocks. With the help of Peter and the pilot the ship was steered through a very narrow passage, and at last anchored near the Pertomínsky Monastery. The pilot was rewarded with a large sum of money, and Peter made a huge cross, ten feet high, with an inscription, in Dutch: "This cross was made by Captain Peter A.D. 1694." This he carried on his shoulders and set up on the spot where he had landed.

On the fourth day they were again able to set sail, and arrived on the day following at the monastery, where they remained for three days in prayer and fasting. The Solovétsky Monastery, it will be remembered, had been, in the time of the Tsar Alexis, the head-quarters of the Dissidents, and had been besieged by him for nine years. Peter now presented the monks with a thousand rubles, and granted them many privileges. The return to Archangel was accomplished without difficulty, to the delight of Peter's friends, who were in great anxiety with regard to him.

A month later the vessel which he had himself launched on his arrival at Archangel, was ready for sea, and at the same time he received a letter from Andrew Vinius, at Moscow, saying that the frigate purchased at Amsterdam had sailed from Holland six weeks before, and ought by this time to be due at Archangel. Vinius also mentioned that there had been many fires at Moscow, to which Peter replied: "The vessel is completely finished, and has been christened the *Apostle Paul*, and sufficiently fumigated with the incense of Mars. At this fumigation Bacchus also was sufficiently honoured. But how impudent is your Vulcan! He is not satisfied with you who are on dry land, and even here, in the realm of Neptune, he has shown his effrontery;" referring to a barge with grain catching fire, which would have been burned if it had not been for the exertions of Peter and his men. The frigate so anxiously expected from Holland arrived on July 11th. She had forty-four guns, was named the *Santa Profeetie*, and was commanded by Captain Jan Flamm, with a crew of forty sailors. Peter duly announced its arrival to Vinius.

Peter now had his three ships in hand, and was able to start upon his projected cruise. The *Apostle Paul*, with Vice-Admiral Buturlin, took the lead. Then came the new frigate the *Holy Prophecy*, with

Admiral Ramodanófsky and the Tsar ; and lastly the yacht *St Peter*, with Rear-Admiral Gordon, who has left us an account of these events. A signal-book had been drawn up by Peter, which was translated into different languages. After all, the expedition did not come to much. The wind was unfavourable, and previous experience did not encourage them to attempt the open sea. They visited a number of islands in the Dvína, in which they naturally did a great deal of feasting. Indeed, Gordon nearly wrecked his ship on a small island, the pilot having mistaken the crosses in the cemetery for the masts and yards of other vessels. After about a week's sailing they reached the Sviatói Nos, the "Holy Nose," the cape which separates the White Sea from the Northern ocean. Taking leave then of the merchant vessels which they had convoyed, they returned in four days to Archangel. Four days later they set out on their return to Moscow.

As soon as they arrived there Peter proceeded to carry out the great military manœuvres which he had planned with Gordon in the White Sea. Peter's generals and admirals had at this time to be the same persons. Two contending armies were formed. The first, consisting of 7,500 men, was placed under the command of Butnrlín, who received the mock title of the King of Poland. The Russian force was commanded by Ramodanófsky, and included the Preobrazhénsky and the Seménofsky regiments, the two premier regiments of the Russian army. It was probably of about the same size as the other.

The manœuvres took place in a valley on the right bank of the river Moskvá, not far from the capital. Peter did not command, but marched as a bombardier at the head of his favourite Preobrazhénsky regiment. The manœuvres lasted three weeks, and were not conducted in a very serious manner. There were many accidents, and the killed and wounded were

Peter the Great

more in number than was expected. The banquets also occasioned some surprising interludes.

One of the plans was to throw a bridge across the Moskvá, and to capture, according to the rules of war, a fort held by the Polish king. The assault was made irregularly, after a dinner given by Lefort, and the capture was easy; but Peter insisted upon it all being done over again. The manœuvres came to a close at the end of October, and this is the last time that Peter played at war. It may be supposed that Gordon, although he was not in command of either corps, was in fact at the head of both, and directed their manœuvres, acting as umpire. Lefort, also, was so severely burnt in the head and neck that he could not see for six days, and his skin came off in patches. His illness did not, however, prevent the Tsar and his officers from making merry in Lefort's tent.

Certainly Peter's life at this time offered a succession of strange contrasts. Bouts and ship-building, carousing and chemistry, mad revels and serious talks follow each other in bewildering variety. At one time he clambers up to the top of a mast in obedience to the directions of a foreign skipper, at another time he lends his rich bass voice to the solemn service of the Greek Church. Now he sits and drinks the whole night through with several hundred boon companions; next day he grasps his axe and works all day at ship-building, like a common workman. He was quite capable of building a boat with his own hands. We cannot but admire the fresh, genial nature of the man who has left an imperishable name in history, and who will never be deprived of his title of "the Great." At the same time we cannot acquit him of the charge of extravagance. He had thrown off the mystery and the laborious ceremony which hung like a heavy weight on the lives of his predecessors; but with that he also divested himself of much of the dignity

which should belong to all sovereigns, and it is a great tribute to the real strength of Peter's character that he did not suffer more.

He had a strong sense of humour, and his jokes were often of a strange and boisterous character. He always kept a large number of dwarfs and also a contingent of Court fools. He once appeared at Lefort's house accompanied by twenty-four dwarfs riding on horseback. At the beginning of 1695 he celebrated the marriage of one of his Court fools, Turgénief. The carriages were drawn by goats, pigs, and dogs. The guests were dressed in sackings, boots made of straw, and gloves of mouse-skin. His wife had no influence over him—indeed, he contracted at this time an intimate relation with the pretty daughter of a goldsmith named Mons, which caused him much trouble at a later period.

It is difficult to say how far Peter, in his military and naval occupations, was merely amusing himself or was preparing the future of Russia by a deep-seated foresight. Doubtless for the objects which he had in view, and which he eventually attained, a fleet and army were absolutely necessary, and no Russian sovereign could have created them but himself. Also he would have been unable to bring about the internal reforms in Russia which have given such lustre to his name if he had not been as well versed in every detail of foreign life as a Russian of those days could be. We now enter upon his first serious enterprise, the campaign against Azof.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN AGAINST AZOF.

IN all probability Peter had little or nothing to do with bringing about the war with the Tartars. This was the act of the Government, in which he took no part or interest. But when war was once determined upon, Peter, with characteristic energy, determined to take part in it, even if he had to serve as a private soldier.

For some time Austria and Poland had been pressing the Russian Government to take action against Turkey. In 1691 an Austrian envoy appeared in Moscow urging a campaign against the barbarians. Gordon well knew that Russia was not then in a position to take such a step, and would content herself with the defence of her own frontier. Gordon wrote again in 1692: "We live here in peace, and the strongest representations of our allies will not induce us to undertake anything of importance." However, the raids of the Tartars continued. In 1692, they appeared, twelve thousand strong, before the town of Nemirof, in Little Russia, burnt the suburbs, carried off a number of prisoners, and stole a large quantity of horses. They were driven back by the aid of local troops. It was reported at the same time that the Turks who were established in Azof were preparing to invade the Russian territory.

The question of the Holy Places, which was one of the causes of the Crimean War in 1853, now also

makes its appearance. In September 1691 Dositheus, Patriarch of Constantinople, writes to the Tsars, that the French have induced the Turks, by money and fair words, to surrender to them a large portion of the Holy Places, half Golgotha, the Church of Bethlehem, and other things, and that the French are also preparing to restore the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, so as to appear as the possessors of it. Dositheus urged the Tsars not to permit this encroachment, even if resistance should lead to war.

For the time these representations produced no effect, but at the end of 1694 Gordon writes to a friend, "I believe and hope that we shall undertake something in the coming summer which will be to the advantage of Christianity and of our allies." The mobilisation of the army for a campaign in the Crimea was actually ordered on January 10th, 1695. The plan of campaign was so ordered that Boris Sheremétief, with an army of a hundred and twenty thousand men, assisted by the Cossacks under their new Hetman Mazeppa, should go down the Dniéper and attack the fortresses of Otchakóf and Kazikermán, which, with other forts, protected that river, and that an army of thirty-one thousand men, comprising Peter's favourite regiment, as well as a large number of Streltsi, should march against Azof.

This second army was commanded in a peculiar manner. It had no regular general-in-chief, but was placed under a Council of three persons, Golovín, Lefort, and Gordon. Their orders were to receive the sanction of the "bombardier of the Preobrazhénsky regiment, Peter Alexéief." Peter appears to have kept the command of the artillery in his own hands.

This quadruple arrangement was not a success. Jealousies arose between Lefort and Gordon. There was no unity of plan. Peter often had to decide between the conflicting views of the Swiss and the Scotchman, when he had but little experience in such

matters, and no military genius. Lefort had, at this time, more influence over the Tsar than Gordon, who complains in his diary of the perverse ideas of his colleague, and says that he was often obliged to conform to orders which were at entire variance with his own views. Circumstances seem to have shown that Gordon was right; but at the same time his conduct in this campaign was afterwards made a ground for accusation against him. We find in this campaign the same difficulties which occurred in the previous campaign of Golitsyn. There is the same delay in mobilisation, in the transport of troops and supplies; the same want of fodder for the horses, and the same deficiency of water; the same burning of the steppe, although not to so large an extent.

Gordon marched from Moscow, with the vanguard, at the beginning of March, and reached Azof at the beginning of June. He had considerable difficulty in persuading the Don Cossacks to accompany him so far, and seems to have suspected them of treachery. He suffered much from the want of horses. Azof was one of the chief hindrances to Russian access to the Black Sea. It had been, both in ancient and mediæval times, first as the Greek Tanais, and then as the Genoese Tana, a great emporium of Asiatic trade. It had been held against the Turks by the Don Cossacks for six years, from 1637 to 1643, and had then been abandoned by order of the Tsar Michael. The Turks had rebuilt it and had spent much labour in strengthening its fortifications.

The main body of the Azof army did not leave Moscow till May. It proceeded by water and had great difficulty in reaching Nízhni-Nóvgorod, from which place Peter wrote to Viníus: "Strong winds kept us back for two days at Dedínovo, and three days at Múrom. Most of the delay was caused by stupid pilots and workmen, who call themselves masters, but, in reality, are as far from being so, as

the earth is from heaven." They reached Azof on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, the name-day of Peter, June 29th. It was determined to begin the siege at once, and it lasted for fourteen weeks. The Don Cossacks took a Turkish fort which hindered their supply of provisions, and another which enabled them to throw a bridge of boats across the river.

But on the very afternoon of this success an intimate friend of Peter's, one Jacob Jannsen, a Dutchman by birth, deserted to the enemy. It is said, upon good authority, that Peter had been in the habit of giving this man much of his confidence, and of talking with him day and night. Jannsen revealed to the Turks all the knowledge he was possessed of, and they were, consequently, able to make some successful assaults upon the Russian camp. Besides this, some Russian dissidents, who were resident in Azof, were sent into the Russian camp as spies, dressed as Cossacks, and brought reports of what the Russians were doing. From them the Turks heard that the Russians were in the habit of sleeping after their midday meal. A sortie was made at this time of the day, and the Turks were driven back after an engagement which lasted three hours, in which Gordon himself was nearly taken prisoner.

Peter soon learnt that there was a great difference between sport and reality. The artillery was found insufficient for its purpose. The commissariat had neglected to provide salt for the army. The Streltsi showed themselves insubordinate. The Tsar had to set them an example by filling bombs and grenades with his own hands. Gordon complained that every one was acting as if they were not in earnest. Reporting in his diary the proceedings of a council of war, he says that "as usual," nothing was decided upon.

They now began to talk about the necessity of an immediate storm. Gordon, who was acquainted with

the difficulty of such operations, and had for many years been conversant with the disposition of the troops, strongly opposed this proposal of the Council. He was overruled, and then tried to influence the Tsar himself. This was equally useless. He represented that it was absolutely necessary to complete certain trenches which might serve as refuges if the attacking force was repelled. He was not listened to. The assault took place on August 5th, and completely failed. The Russians lost fifteen hundred men whom they could badly spare. Gordon laid the blame on "the advisers of Rehoboam," and saw himself surrounded by many angry looks and scornful faces. There were no proper engineers to conduct the siege. The chief of them was Franz Timmermann. He was assisted by Adam Weide, James Bruce, and one Morlot, a Swiss. They seem not to have been adepts in their art. On September 6th a mine was exploded, in spite of Gordon's representations, before it had been carried far enough, with the result of doing no harm to the Turks but killing a considerable number of Russians. A second mine was afterwards fired, with similar mischance.

A second attempt to storm was not more successful than the first. We learn from Gordon's diary that in supporting this Peter set himself against Gordon's advice. Peter was evidently hot-headed and impatient. As Gordon says, "there was no sound judgement as to what ought to be done." Lefort, in a letter to his relations at Geneva says that Peter had underrated the strength of the garrison of Azof. He expresses the opinion, at the same time, that if the Russian army had been stronger by ten thousand men, the town would have been taken. Be this as it may, nothing was now accomplished. Retreat was determined upon on September 27th. The only success was the capture of the two Kalóntski forts, in which a garrison was left of three thousand men.

The consequences of this failure were painful. Peter had to lament the loss of some dear private friends. He was often depressed, although he did his best to maintain a cheerful tone in his letters to his friends at Moscow. The catastrophe was not likely to increase the popularity of foreigners in Russian circles. Disasters were certain to be ascribed to them, justly or unjustly, and Gordon remarks that for some days after the unfortunate explosion of the mine, Adam Weide, the engineer, did not dare to show his face.

The retreat was executed with great difficulty. Some of the troops were drowned by an inundation caused by a storm in the Sea of Azof. The rear guard, commanded by Gordon, was often attacked by swarms of Tartars. One regiment was almost entirely destroyed, and its colonel taken prisoner. The steppe which Gordon had found in the spring "full of manifold flowers and herbs, asparagus, wild thyme, marjoram, tulips, pinks, melilot, and maiden gilly-flowers," was now bare and naked. The soldiers suffered extremely from the severe cold. The Austrian military *attaché*, Pleyer, who accompanied the army, writes to his Government: "I saw great quantities of the best provisions, which could have kept a large army for a year, either ruined by the bad weather or lost by the barges going to the bottom. What was left was divided by the Cossacks. On the way I learnt what great loss the army suffered in the march, although no enemy pursued it, for it was impossible to see without tears, how through the whole steppe for eight hundred versts, men and horses lay half eaten by the wolves, and many villages were full of sick, half of whom died, as well as many others infected by them, all of which was very painful to see and to hear." Gordon reckons the loss at Azof at two thousand men.

The failure had been almost as complete as in

Golitsyn's campaigns of 1687 and 1689, while the actual loss had been greater. Peter, however, entered the capital in triumph, with a captive Turk led before him. An excuse for this might have been found in the fact that Sheremétief had achieved a partial success by the capture of Kazikermán and Tagán, two out of the four fortresses which he set out to conquer.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND CAMPAIGN AGAINST AZOF.

PETER did not conceal from himself the seriousness of his disaster. On the other hand, he showed his greatness by setting to work immediately to repair it. He paid no attention to the remonstrances of the Patriarch and others that his defeat was due to the presence of heretics in the camp. On the contrary, he determined to support the operations of the army with a fleet, and to seek the co-operation of foreigners more heartily than ever. Pleyer, the Austrian, informs us that, during the siege, a report reached the Turks that Peter had sent for the assistance of two German regiments, and that they had determined that they would surrender as soon as these should arrive.

However, engineers and ship-builders were more important now to Peter than soldiers. During the retreat he had written to the Emperor of Germany and to the King of Poland, saying that his failure was due to the want of proper cannon and of experienced engineers, but that he intended to renew the attempt. Peter entreated the King of Poland to attack the Turks on his own account, and the Emperor as well as the Elector of Brandenburg, to send him able engineers and miners. He also sent a request to the Republic of Venice for thirteen Venetian shipbuilders.

Indeed, his principal need at this time was a fleet of galleys by which Azof could be enclosed on the

sea side, and communication with the fortress prevented. Peter determined to build this fleet at the town of Vorónezh, situated on a river of the same name, about three hundred miles south of Moscow. This place had the advantage of being surrounded by a large forest, now indeed much injured, and the inhabitants had been experienced for many years past in making barges. These, constructed entirely of wood, had been built in very large numbers every year, for the purpose of conveying the grain and wine sent annually as salary to the Cossacks of the Don. They were not intended to return, and, when they had reached their destination, were broken up for firewood. To this place Peter summoned all the Dutch and English ship-builders from Archangel. The Vorónezh flowed into the Don, and the Don into the Sea of Azof, so that Peter's course was clear.

Hard work was continued here throughout the winter, and as many as twenty-six thousand men were employed. The materials for the ships were brought to Vorónezh on thousands of carts and waggons. Private iron-works were requisitioned for supplies of their productions, with a promise to pay at a late period. Peter showed the unbending character of his will. Before the necessities of the Azof expedition all other considerations had to give way. The model for the vessels he required existed in a galley which he had some time before ordered to be constructed in Holland, and which had been brought to Moscow by way of Archangel. It could be taken to pieces, and was put together in the saw-mills at Preobrazhénsk. From the different parts of this galley similar constructions could easily be made. At this time, indeed after the failure of his first campaign, Peter began to take an interest in public affairs, and, now also he became sole ruler, as his brother Iván died at the end of January 1696. This did not prevent him from going to Vorónezh at the end of February,

where a small house with two rooms had been prepared for him.

The first galley was ready on April 2nd. Peter called it the *Principium*. He had many difficulties to deal with. Many of his workmen deserted, others fell ill, outbreaks of bad weather hindered the work. The Tsar himself was very far from well, and Lefort was unable to accompany him, from the same cause. What Peter lost in companionship posterity has gained in letters. As may be expected, Peter did not spare himself. Writing to a *boyár* he says, "According to the divine decree given to our ancestor Adam, we are eating our bread in the sweat of our brow." The galleys, *St. Mark* and *St. Matthew*, followed the *Principium*, the first of these we may suppose being so named out of compliment to the Venetian ship-builders. Altogether thirteen hundred barges for the conveyance of troops, ammunition, and provisions were provided.

The question of command had been already settled. It was impossible to leave matters to a "council" as before. Therefore on December 14th, 1695, Peter had discussed the matter with Gordon and Lefort, and had determined that the generalissimo should be, in the first place, Prince Tcherkásky, and if he were unable to undertake the command, the Boyár Shéin. Lefort received the rank of admiral. He was to hoist his flag on the galley which had been brought from Holland, as we have already mentioned.

On April 21st, Shéin, the commander-in-chief, hoisted on his galley the great flag bearing the arms of the Tsar, with a representation of the sea with ships, and of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the corners. This had been embroidered at a convent in Moscow, and brought to Vorónezh by Timmermann. The flag is still preserved in Moscow. Gordon was the first to arrive on the scene of action. Then came the Tsar, who had been able to sail swiftly with his lighter

galleys. Then arrived some regiments under the command of Lefort. The operations might have been begun in May. But it was a serious question whether the Russian fleet, constructed in such haste, of damp wood, and manned by inexperienced crews, could take the sea against the Turks.

On May 21st Peter paid a visit to Gordon, and told him that he had received news that a Turkish fleet was cruising off the mouth of the Don, and that he did not think it desirable to risk an attack, and that he should order his galleys to return. He appeared "very melancholious and grieved." At three o'clock he returned with the news that the pirate Cossacks of the Don had captured some of the Turkish barges in the night, with their contents, and had so frightened the Turks that they sailed away with their whole fleet excepting two, which they left behind. One of them was sunk by the Turks, and the other burnt by the Cossacks.

Peter immediately proceeded to the mouth of the river, and was followed by Gordon with a detachment of troops. The Tsar now stationed himself, with his whole flotilla of twenty-nine galleys, at the mouth of the river, and completely cut off the Turkish communications with Azof. Gordon also erected two forts, and when they were ready, Peter could write to Ramodanófsky, "We are now entirely out of danger from the Turkish fleet."

The cannonading of the fortress began on June 16th. Up to that time there had been some unimportant skirmishes with the Tartars, who attacked the Russians from the steppe, but were easily driven back. During the bombardment Peter lived on board his galley, the *Principium*, and only came to Azof from time to time to attend the councils of war. In this manner he often exposed himself to considerable danger, and his sister Natalia wrote to him begging him to take more care of himself. He replied in a laughing

manner, "I do not go to the bombs and balls ; they come to me. Order them not to do so." The Russians shot an arrow into the town with a letter containing propositions of peace. The only answer was a renewed cannonade. The bombardment produced very little effect, and the Russians were at a loss what to do.

The common soldiers now suggested the idea of building a wall of earth, under cover of which they might work, and gradually approach the walls of the town, until they were able to get to close quarters. Gordon favoured the notion, and carried it still further, employing fifteen hundred men, day and night. Two days after the beginning of the enterprise, on June 23rd, the foreign engineers arrived. They had travelled leisurely, because at Vienna they were not able to learn anything about the military operations, and did not suppose that they were required so soon. The reason for this is curious. The Russian ambassador at Vienna had been purposely kept in ignorance of what was going on, for fear he should publish the news. Peter told the official responsible for this that in future what he did not write on paper he should write on his back ; we may suppose with the knout. The new arrivals gave the Russians great credit for the strength and solidity of their earth-works, but suggested some improvement in the manner of bombardment, and under their direction an important corner-buttress of the fortress was demolished. The Russians began to understand that the operations were now governed by a new intelligence.

The Zaporovian Cossacks were becoming very weary of the slow progress of the siege. They therefore entered into communication with the Cossacks of the Don, and on July 17th, without orders, they stormed the fortifications from the earth-wall or mound, and entered the town. They were not, however, supported, and were compelled to retreat. Another attack was resolved upon for the following day, when the Turks

suddenly announced that they were prepared to surrender the town. It cannot be said whether this was due to the attack of the Cossacks, to the efficiency of the earth-mound, to the arrival of the foreign engineers, or to the blockade of the fortress with the assistance of the fleet. Perhaps the impression was produced by all these things working together. At any rate, the victory was won.

The garrison marched out with their wives and children and with the honours of war. The traitor Jannsen was, with some reluctance, delivered up to Peter, and was afterwards executed at Moscow. There can be no doubt that the success was an honour for Peter and his army, and that it was due in great measure to the existence of the fleet. On entering the fortress it was found that although the besieged had plenty of cannon and powder, bullets were entirely wanting. At the last assault the Turks were compelled to fire gold ducats cut up into small pieces. This, to a great extent, explains the surrender. Peter's first care was to repair the battered fortress, his next to find a convenient harbour for his flotilla. After a week spent in surveying, he discovered this at Tagan-róg (the horn of Tagan). The Turkish mosques in the town of Azof were transformed into Christian churches, and Peter was able to hear divine service in one of them before his departure.

Peter now ordered preparations to be made for the solemn entry of the victorious troops into Moscow. In the meantime he paid a visit to the iron-works in the neighbourhood of Túla. Here he met Nikíta Demídof, the cleverest smith and iron-forging in the whole region, and made a great friendship with him. To this friendship are due the large grants of land made to the Demídof family in the Ural Mountains, from which they became one of the wealthiest families in Europe. Mazeppa, the Hetman of the Cossacks, met the Tsar on the road from

Vorónezh to Túla and presented him with a magnificent sabre, set with precious stones. He told him of the successful attacks of the Zaporovian Cossacks upon the Turkish fleet in the Black Sea.

The triumphal entry into Moscow took place on September 30th. The influence of the foreigners was apparent in the procession. Vinius had charge of the triumphal arches, which he had erected on classical models. The Russian peasants looked amazed at emblems and attributes taken from Greek mythology, at inscriptions referring to Hercules and Mars, to the victory of Constantius over Maxentius. They could better understand the colossal figures of the Turks, and the huge pictures which represented battles and sea-fights. The generals rode in the procession in carriages or on horseback. Lefort occupied the sledge of the Tsar himself, while Peter walked behind it, with a partizan in his hand, in the simple uniform of a sea-captain. This apparent humility was in all probability not very agreeable to popular feeling.

The capture of Azof produced a great effect throughout the civilised world. At Constantinople the consternation was so great that some high officials were executed. All the janissaries who could be found were arrested, and their goods confiscated; and the commandant who had surrendered the town, fled to save his life, but lost the whole of his property. The feeling in Europe was just as strong. The last Russian victories had been gained by the Tsar Alexis over the Poles and Swedes many years ago. Since that time there had been a series of defeats. It was undoubtedly a great glory to have inflicted a severe blow on the common enemy of Christendom. The Western Powers had now begun to pay a greater attention to Eastern affairs, and it was obvious that the alliance with Russia would be worth having to any Power who was interested in them. But

congratulation was not unmixed with jealousy. There were many who did not desire a too rapid rise for Russia, and this feeling was especially strong in Poland.

The situation of affairs in this country was coming to that condition which was to give Peter occupation during a large portion of his career. The great King John Sobiesky had died in the summer of 1696. As the crown was hereditary, the choice of a successor occasioned considerable controversy. The two principal candidates were the Prince of Conti, the nephew of the great Condé, supported by the French, and Augustus, the physically strong, as Carlyle calls him, Elector of Saxony.

Before the conquest of Azof, a Frenchman, named Fourni, who had accompanied the foreign engineers to Russia, and was now returned to Warsaw, spoke with high approval of the effect which the energy of Peter had produced on the military activity of the Russian Empire. The Polish Senators shook their heads over the boldness and activity of the young Tsar, and asked what was to come of it. One voievode remarked that the Russians owed everything to King John, who had made an alliance with them and so stimulated them to be a warlike people ; without that the Russians would have been paying tribute to the Tartars until the present day, and would have remained quietly at home ; but it was easy to see that they would now acquire a certain polish. Another voievode remarked that it would have been better for them to have remained at home ; if they received polish and once smelt blood, then we should see what would come of it. The Lord forbid it !

Nikítin, the Russian Resident in Warsaw, received the news of the capture of Azof on August 29th, during divine service. He immediately ordered a prayer of thanksgiving to be offered, and feasted the

people with beer and bread. On September 1st, he made, in a sitting of the Senate, a speech in praise of the Tsar. He said that, like a true Peter, he had with the sign of the cross opened the doors of Jerusalem, which had been lost, and which now might be regained by Christians. He would soon march against the Crimea, but he needed allies to assist him against the common enemy. The way lay open to Constantinople, the wealthy Arabia might become the prey of the Polish eagle; now was the time to enlarge the borders of Poland and, with the cross in their hands, to grind the heathen to powder. It was better to acquire solid titles to fame in this way than to claim titles which did not belong to them. A threat was contained in these last words, because the Polish kings still retained the titles of Grand Dukes of Smolénsk and Kief, which no longer belonged to them, but to Russia. Two days after this speech the Imperial Resident informed Nikitin that the Senators had determined to suppress the titles that were objected to, but that they were not pleased at the capture of Azof, which was entirely unexpected on their part.

Nikitin reported to Moscow that, on September 11th, the Poles had celebrated the capture of Azof by the firing of guns, and in other ways, and tried to appear as if they were much delighted. But in reality they were not so; they were rather considering whether they should not ally themselves against the Russians with the Khan of the Crimea, who had warned them against Peter. It was indeed a great pity that the Poles did not accept the offer of the Tsar. The reign of Peter would have been more uniformly successful, as well as more beneficent in its consequences, if it had led to the extension of the Russian empire to the South rather than to the North, and to the seeking of an outlet to Europe rather through the Mediterranean than through the Baltic.

Sapieha, the Hetman of Lithuania, attempted to diminish the reputation of Peter by saying that, after all the Russians had not done so very much, because they had achieved no success at sea, and Azof had not been taken by storm, but had capitulated. To this Nikítin replied that he should be quite satisfied if not only the whole of Turkey, but also Poland and Lithuania capitulated in like manner, because then at any rate the Poles would have peace and quiet instead of the continual contentions by which they were at present agitated.

With regard to the rest of the continent, Nikítin reported that the lilies of France were blanched by the thunder and lightning of Peter's triumph, but that Spain, Portugal, England, Holland, and Venice, were really glad at heart. Undoubtedly Prussia, not then a kingdom, hailed with joy the rise of the new Power. When Peter appeared at Königsberg in the following year fireworks were let off in his honour, and one of the tableaux represented the Russian fleet before Azof sailing in a sea of flame. It was natural that a similar feeling should be shown in Holland and Venice, which might take some credit to themselves for the success of the enterprise. Moscow, situated in the middle of a country difficult of approach, had now fixed her foot firmly upon the sea and had laid the foundations of a fleet.

Peter himself was not by any means content with what he had done. He determined to establish a large fleet in the Black Sea. He sent three thousand families of peasants and three thousand Streltsi and soldiers to people the empty town of Azof. To provide a fleet, every proprietor with ten thousand peasants' families, and every monastery with eight thousand, was obliged to furnish a ship, fully armed and equipped, before April 1698. The merchants were to provide twelve mortar-boats, and others were to contribute in like manner. Smaller proprietors were ordered to

enrol themselves into companies for the construction of ships, similar to the symmories of the ancient Greeks. The ships and galleys were to be built at Vorónezh. The Government provided the timber, but nothing else. As a fact, the vessels were nearly all built by contractors who were resident in the German suburb. Most of the vessels were ready by the appointed time.

We must again quote the words of Peter himself, in the preface to the "Maritime Regulations": "On this account he turned his whole mind to the construction of a fleet, and when, on account of the insults of the Tartars, the siege of Azof was begun, and afterwards that town was fortunately taken, then, according to his unchangeable will, he did not endure thinking long about it. He quickly set about the work. A suitable place for ship-building was found on the River Vorónezh, close to the town of that name, skilful shipwrights were called from England and Holland, and in 1696 there began a new work in Russia, the construction of great war-ships, galleys, and other vessels. And that this might be for ever secured in Russia, and that he might introduce among his people the art of this business, he sent many people of noble families to Holland and other states to learn the building and management of ships. And that the monarch might not be shamefully behind his subjects in that trade, he himself took a journey to Holland, and in Amsterdam, at the East India wharf, giving himself up, with other volunteers, to the learning of naval architecture, he got what was necessary for a good carpenter to know, and, by his own work and skill, constructed and launched a new ship."

As mentioned in the preceding account, Peter sent abroad fifty nobles, belonging to the highest and most distinguished families in the Empire. Twenty-eight were ordered to Italy, and the rest to England and

Holland. Most of them were married and had families, so that we may imagine the order to leave their country suddenly was not especially acceptable to them. Each of them was accompanied by a soldier. They were instructed to make themselves familiar with the use of charts, compasses, and navigation, to learn the art of ship-building and the duties of common sailors. If any one returned without permission, or without a certificate of proficiency, his property was to be confiscated. They were to pay their own expenses. Among those sent were members of the distinguished families Kurákin, Dolgorúky Tolstói, and Hilkóf. It is remarkable that not one of them acquired reputation in naval matters, although many became eminent in other ways, and they all probably profited by their enforced years of absence from the prejudices of their own country. But far more important than the mission of these disciples was the journey of Peter himself. His years of learning were now at an end, and his years of wandering began. With this enterprise, which dates from 1691, begins the epoch of those far-reaching reforms which obliterated the Russia of the Kremlin and created the Russia of to-day.

CHAPTER X.

PETER'S JOURNEY TO THE WEST.

MANY reasons have been assigned for Peter's journey to Western Europe. Some have said that it was in fulfilment of a vow which he had made when in danger in the White Sea, that he would visit the graves of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome ; others have described it as a mere voyage of pleasure. Both these reasons are certainly groundless. There is more in Voltaire's suggestion, that he left his dominions for a time in order to learn how better to govern them, and a deep insight in Napoleon's remark : " He left his country to deliver himself for a while from the crown, so as to learn ordinary life, and to remount by degrees to greatness." It was natural also that he should desire to set the example of foreign travel to his subjects, and that, having commanded many of them to sojourn abroad, at great inconvenience, he should wish to show them that he was ready to undergo the same privations himself. There is no doubt that his journey would tend to make similar journeys fashionable.

Still, his main object was to learn the art of ship-building in Holland and in England. Out of the year and a half which he spent away from his country, nine months, or half the time, were given to hard work at the ship-yards. Also, it is expressly mentioned, in the instructions to the Embassy which went with him, that their object was to be the engagement of skilled

workmen, and the workers of sail-cloth, ropes, anchors, cork, and saws. The whip which he carried with him was a curious piece of workmanship. It was decorated with Peter's portrait, surrounded by all kinds of tools—compass, hammer, axe, etc.—and it bore the inscription, "I am in the condition of a learner, and I desire teachers."

The determination to undertake the journey was finally formed in the last month of 1696. The origination of the plan is generally ascribed to Lefort. On December 6th, 1696, it was publicly announced in Moscow that the Tsar had the intention of sending an embassy to the Emperor, to the Kings of England and Denmark, to the Pope, the States-General of Holland, the Elector of Brandenburg and the Republic of Venice, with the idea of uniting the Christian Powers to fight against the Sultan. It was, indeed, to be a kind of complimentary visit paid by Russia to the chief Western Powers, in order to announce her resolve to become a part of the European system.

The Embassy was formed and fitted out with great magnificence. At the head of it was placed Francis Lefort, and under him two Russians, Golovin and Voznitsyn. Lefort owed his position not so much to political knowledge as to his pleasant manners, and his tact in intercourse with men. He passed for a clever and cultivated man, but we cannot discover that he had any political talent.

The Embassy consisted of two hundred persons, amongst whom were thirty "volunteers" sent abroad to learn ship-building. They were divided into three companies, each of whom was under a decurion or *desiátnik*. One of these decurions was Peter himself. His presence with the Embassy was kept a profound secret. Even if there were reports that Peter was to make a tour, it was not known that he was present with the Embassy. To avoid discovery, Peter always wrote to his friends in Moscow with sympathetic ink,

which could not be read without undergoing a chemical process. He was never to be addressed except as *Min Her Peter Mikháilof*, discarding even the termination "vitch" which was assumed by the higher aristocracy. It was forbidden to mention his presence with the Embassy under pain of death, and we find that even the younger Lefort did not allude to it in his letters home until September 1697, many months after they had started. He then said that it was impossible to keep the matter secret.

This incognito had great advantages. It enabled Peter to become a serious student, to move about freely, to associate with any one he pleased, and at the same time to converse openly with persons of high rank on questions of politics. To govern the kingdom during his absence he appointed a regency consisting of three persons, *Leo Naryshkin*, *Boris Golitsyn* and *Prince Peter Prozorófsky*. This triumvirate was invested with supreme power, and *Gordon*, in his diary, always speaks of them as "their majesties." Moscow was committed to the charge of *Prince Ramodanófsky*.

Just as the preparations for the journey were concluded, an unexpected delay occurred. As *Gordon* says, "A merry night has been spoilt by an accident of discovering treason against his Majesty." The Colonel of the *Streltsi*, *Iván Zickler*, and two Russian nobles of high rank, *Alexis Sokóvnin* and *Theodore Púshkin*, were accused, on the testimony of *Láron Yelisárof*, of plotting against the life of the Tsar. There was probably no plot, but only loose and unguarded talk. However, the accused were tried, tortured, and condemned, being beheaded in the Red Square after having their arms and legs chopped off. The causes of their discontent were their attachment to dissent and their dislike of Peter's innovations.

It is said that Peter received news of this con-

spiracy at eight o'clock on the evening of the very day on which it was to be executed, as he was dining with Lefort. He said nothing about it, and ordered a captain of the guard, Liminof, to surround the house in which the conspirators were assembled. He went there himself at about ten, before his guards had arrived, and walked into the dining-hall as if to take part in the feast. They drank to his health, and when he rose to reply Theodore Púshkin said in a low voice, "It is time, brother." Sokóvnin replied, "Not yet." Then Peter called out, "It is my time, you wretch," and struck Púshkin a violent blow in the face; and at the same moment Liminof entered with his troops. The conspirators, seeing that they were betrayed, fell at the feet of the Tsar and begged for pardon; but he only said, "Take away these dogs and strangle them."

Peter left Moscow on March 10th, 1697. He was obliged to avoid Poland, because of the disturbed state of the kingdom in consequence of the elections. He had therefore to pass through Sweden, and came first to Riga. It is a curious fact that, when the Northern war broke out, three years later, his discourteous reception in this town by Eric Dalberg, the governor, was put forward as a serious grievance. Peter had, in fact, no grievance whatever.

A severe famine was raging in Livonia. It was difficult for the Livonian Government to provide sufficient horses and carriages for so large a company, and the governor of Pskov, whose duty it was to give notice to the Government of Riga of what they had to expect, had failed to do so. In consequence they found no carriages to meet them and no sufficiency of food. They were treated civilly enough in Riga itself, but they had to pay dear for their board and lodging. Dalberg, although he knew that Peter was present, respected the Tsar's incognito. As the Embassy was not accredited to Sweden, he did not think it

right to enter into personal relations with the Russian Ambassador, who was merely passing through the country. So there were no military spectacles and no fireworks, but a certain coolness and stiffness. The governor acted, no doubt, with perfect correctness, but it would have been much better for himself and for his country if he had behaved differently.

Other unpleasantnesses occurred. There were quarrels between Peter's suite and the town authorities, no strange thing if they carried into Sweden the manners of the German Suburb. When Peter went to visit a Dutch ship which was anchored in the Dvina, he was stopped by soldiers ; also they prevented him from examining the fortifications. Lefort admitted that this was perfectly right, but the sting nevertheless remained. Dalberg, when at a later period he wrote to defend himself, maintained that he was quite justified in guarding jealously the secrets of a frontier fortress which had once been attacked by the Russians, and might be attacked again. Peter certainly sent to Vinius a special report on the strength of the garrison and the character of the fortifications ; he also despatched to Ramodanófsky specimens of the saddles used by the Swedish soldiers. However, the sore rankled. Peter wrote to Vinius : " Here we lived in a slavish way, and were tired with the mere sight of things " ; and in 1709, when Peter began the siege of Riga, he threw the first bombshells into the town with his own hand, and wrote to Menshikóf : " May God grant us grace to avenge ourselves on this accursed place."

The Embassy had to stay at Riga a whole week, until the Dvina was free from ice and they were able to proceed. On April 10th they arrived at Mitau, the capital of Curland. Here they experienced a warm and brilliant reception. The Duke of Curland, Frederick Casimir, had known Lefort many years before in Holland, and their adventures together in

their youthful days had been of a tumultuous character. They met now under changed circumstances. Peter in part laid aside his incognito ; he visited the Duke and the Duchess, and had much conversation with private persons on Russian affairs. It was here that he confided to Blomberg what has been previously narrated about the election of the Patriarch. Peter also was not idle in his craft. He found time to finish a large beam, seventy feet long, which was still shown in Mitau twenty years ago.

After a fortnight's stay at Mitau he proceeded to Libau, where he saw the Baltic for the first time. He could scarcely anticipate that the Russian fleet would in a few years' time play an important part in these waters, and that the greater part of the coast would belong to Russia. He was detained here for a week by bad weather, and spent his time with sailors, with whom he used to drink in a wine-cellar, giving himself out as the captain of a Russian privateer. He also visited an apothecary's shop, where he was much struck by the sight of a salamander preserved in spirits. After this, as he desired to avoid Polish territory, he went by sea to Pillau, the port of Königsberg, whereas the rest of the Embassy travelled by land by way of Memel.

Blomberg also tells us of the visit to Curland : "Open tables were kept everywhere, with trumpets and music, with feasting and excessive drinking all the time, as if his Tsarish Majesty had been another Bacchus. I have never seen such hard drinkers ; it is not possible to express it, and they boast of it as a mighty qualification."

Frederick, Elector of Brandenburg, who was soon to become the first King of Prussia, was naturally much interested at Peter's arrival, and had taken great pains to ascertain every detail of the journey. He sent a chamberlain to meet Peter at Pillau, and to offer hospitality, but met with an evasive answer.

At Königsberg Peter lived in a small house ; but he drove out late at night to call on the Elector, and was admitted by a private staircase. The interview lasted for an hour and a half. He could not allow the Elector to return his visit, but went to him again, and was entertained by him at his country house, where he witnessed a bear fight and attended a hunting party. The Embassy arrived eleven days later, and was received with great splendour. They appeared before the Elector in Russian costume. Peter stood at the window to see them coming, but, notwithstanding this, the Elector had to ask Lefort how the Tsar was, and whether they had left him in good health. Fireworks were let off in their honour, which represented, amongst other things, the Russian arms and the victory of Azof.

We have detailed accounts of this visit in the correspondence of the philosopher Leibnitz with the Electress Sophia Charlotte. He says that Peter made a very favourable impression. They admired his good temper and affability, his ready wit, and his skill in trumpet-blowing and drum-beating. Leibnitz also writes : Lefort drinks like a hero ; no one can rival him. It is feared that he will be the death of some of the Elector's courtiers. Beginning in the evening, he does not leave his pipe and glass till three hours after sunrise, and yet he is a man of great ability." At Königsberg, as elsewhere, Peter did not neglect serious duties. He was regularly instructed in artillery practice, and received a certificate saying that Peter Micháilof had thoroughly learnt the use of firearms and of all kinds of artillery. The exercise-books which he used at this time are still extant, and they show the conscientiousness and the extent of his labour. They contain rules of all kinds for the mixing of powder, the calibre of the guns, and the art of firing them.

Frederick had hoped to induce Peter to sign a

defensive alliance, protecting Brandenburg against attacks from Sweden or Poland ; but in this he was disappointed. The object Peter had chiefly in view was the prosecution of the war with Turkey. He therefore confined himself to presenting the Elector with vague answers. A kind of treaty was indeed signed on June 12th, but it had only reference to commercial affairs, to the extradition of criminals, to the ceremonial of embassies, and to the good treatment of Russian visitors. The Brandenburgers remarked that on this occasion the members of the Russian Embassy were more affable, more courteous, and more compliant than they had ever been before. They expected that great advantages would ensue from the Russian alliance.

At last the visit came to an end, after a month's sojourn, and Peter went to Pillau to avoid passing through Poland. Here he had to stay three weeks, in consequence of the condition of affairs in that country. The dispute as to the election was of the greatest interest and importance to Russia, and Peter did not venture to proceed until he heard that the election of Augustus was certain.

An incident which occurred just before his departure throws light on the peculiarities of his character. He had prepared a great entertainment for the Elector at Pillau, on June 29th, his name day, the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, one of the most important feasts in the Russian calendar. Frederick sent an excuse, saying that he was obliged to pay a visit to the Duke of Curland at Memel, but that he despatched instead the Graf von Kreyzen and the Landvogt of Schacken to present his congratulations to the Tsar, and to attend the banquet. When the envoys had retired after the dinner to refresh themselves, a very necessary operation if the proceedings were conducted in the usual manner, Peter got into a great rage ; he said that the Elector was good, but

that his counsellors were devils, and he looked sulkily at Graf Kreyzen. As the envoy continued to smile and look pleasant, which was all he could do, Peter hit him twice in the chest and told him to be off. The envoys, as may be supposed, lost no time in returning to Königsberg. Peter wrote a note of apology to the Elector, saying that the envoys had treated him in an unfriendly manner, had caused him a great deal of annoyance, and had run away. He hoped that such worthless brutes would not cause any interruption in the good feeling between himself and their master.

This occurrence, as might be expected, excited a great deal of attention. The papal nuncio, resident at Dantzic, wrote a report of it to the Holy Father, and remarked that the reason of Peter's indignation was that the Elector had not come himself after all the preparations he had made. He also says that the Tsar would have drawn his sword if those who surrounded him had not prevented him. Peter was probably disappointed because Frederick did not come to see his fireworks, which he had most likely prepared with his own hands.

Peter now continued his journey to Holland. He proceeded by sea to Colberg, but did not go farther, because he was afraid of falling in with the French Squadron, which was bringing the Prince de Conti to Poland. He did not himself visit Berlin, although his suite went there, and were handsomely entertained. He inspected the celebrated iron-works at Ilsenburg, in the Hartz, and ascended the Brocken. From thence he went to a place called Koppenbrügge, where he met Sophia Charlotte, the Electress of Brandenburg, and her mother the Electress of Hanover. We have accounts of the visit written by both these ladies. Peter went to sup with them, danced afterwards, and made himself generally agreeable. The party did not break up till four in the morning.

Sophia Charlotte writes : " My mother and I began to pay him our compliments, but he made Mr. Lefort reply for him, for he seemed shy, hid his face in his hands, and said, '*Ich kann nicht sprechen.*' We tamed him a little, and he sat down at the table between my mother and myself, and we talked to him in turn, each striving who should do it. Sometimes he replied himself, sometimes by interpreters, but he said nothing which was not to the point on all the subjects which were suggested, for the vivacity of my mother put to him many questions, to which he replied with the same readiness, and I was astonished that he was not tired with the conversation, for I have been told that it is not much the habit in his country. As to his grimaces, I imagined them worse than I found them, and some are not in his power to correct. One can see also that he has had no one to teach him how to eat properly, but he has a natural, unconstrained air which pleases me."

The mother says, writing a few days later : " The Tsar is very tall, his features are fine and his figure very noble. He has great vivacity of mind, and a ready and just repartee. But, with all the advantages with which nature has endowed him, it could be wished that his manners were a little less rustic. We immediately sat down to table. Herr Koppenstein, who did the duty of marshal, presented the napkin to his Majesty, who was greatly embarrassed, for, instead of a table-napkin, at Brandenburg they had given him an ewer and a basin after the meal. He was very gay, very talkative, and we established a great friendship for each other, and he exchanged snuff-boxes with my daughter. We stayed, in truth, a very long time at table, but we would gladly have remained there longer still without feeling a moment of *ennui*, for the Tsar was in very good humour, and never ceased talking to us. My daughter had her Italians sing. Their song pleased him, though he

confessed to us that he did not care much for music. I asked him if he liked hunting. He replied that his father had been very fond of it, but that he himself, from his earliest youth, had had a real passion for navigation and fireworks. He told us that he worked himself in building ships, showed us his hands, and made us touch the callous places that had been caused by work. He brought his musicians, and they played Russian dances, which we liked better than Polish ones. Le Fort and his nephew dressed in French style and had much wit. We did not speak to the other ambassadors. We regretted that we could not stay longer, so that we could see him again, for his society gave us much pleasure. He is a very extraordinary man. It is impossible to describe him, or even to give an idea of him, unless you have seen him. He has a very good heart, and remarkably noble sentiments. I must tell you, also, that he did not get drunk in our presence, but we had hardly left when the people of his suite made ample amends."

In another letter she says :—

"They have four dwarfs. Two of them are very well-proportioned, and perfectly well-bred : sometimes he kissed, and sometimes he pinched the ear of his favourite dwarf. He took the head of our little Princess, (Sophia Dorothea, ten years old,) and kissed her twice. The ribbons of her hair suffered in consequence. He also kissed her brother (afterwards George II. of England, then sixteen years old). He is a prince at once very good and very *méchant*. He has quite the manners of his country. If he had received a better education, he would be an accomplished man, for he has many good qualities, and an infinite amount of natural wit."

CHAPTER XI.

PETER IN HOLLAND.

PETER was extremely anxious to reach Holland, and he chose the route down the Rhine. At Emmerich he left the embassy and hired a little boat to take him down to Amsterdam. At Schenkenschanz, the Dutch frontier, a large crowd was assembled to see the Tsar. A woman went up to the company and asked whether they were Christians, as there was a report that the whole mission was to be baptized at Cleves. Peter reached Amsterdam on the afternoon of August 7th. He did not stop a moment, but continued his journey to Zaandam. This little town lies on the banks of the River Zaan, a short distance from the wide stream of the Y. At the time of Peter's visit it was the centre of a great ship-building business. There were not less than fifty wharves in Zaandam in which vessels were constructed, and the workmen were so skilled that they could turn out a complete vessel five weeks after the keel was laid. The saw-mills were worked then, as now, by wind power.

Arriving at Zaandam at six o'clock in the morning, the Tsar saw an old friend of his, Gerrit Kist, who had been employed in Russia as a smith, in a small boat fishing for eels. The Russians, who recognised him, called out, "Smith, smith, come here!" Kist was astonished to see a strange boat in the river, and still more to find the Tsar of Muscovy on board. Peter informed Kist that he intended to lodge in his house.

Kist objected that his house was too small and badly furnished. At last, after the ejection of a widow woman at the price of a few shillings, Peter established himself, Kist receiving the strictest orders to tell no one who his lodger was.

Peter had been the first to jump on shore and to moor his ship to the quay. He was dressed like a common sailor, but as the members of his suite wore the Russian costume, a crowd assembled. Peter told them that they had nothing to do with the great Embassy which was expected, but that they were only foreign craftsmen seeking work.

On Monday morning the Tsar purchased a number of carpenter's tools, carried them to his house with his own hands, and set to work at once. The same day he engaged himself as a workman under the name of Peter Mikhailof in the yard of Lynst Teenniszoon Rogge on the Buitenzaan. He did not forget to visit the families of the old friends whom he had known in Russia. One old woman gave him a dram of Geneva, which he accepted with great pleasure; another gave him a dinner. The suite received orders to adopt the Zaandam dress, and the tailors of Amsterdam were set to work with great energy. On the Sunday Peter bought a small row-boat, after much haggling, for forty florins and a quart of beer, which buyer and seller drank together.

Besides the ship-yards, Peter visited the workshops and the shops, the oil- and paper-mills, the saw-mills, the rope-works, sail-manufactories, iron-forgers, and compass-makers. He paid great attention to everything, and showed extraordinary skill in the manipulation of processes which he had never seen before.

On Wednesday the secret of his personality became known. A man of Zaandam, established in Russia, had written to his father that the Tsar could easily be recognised by his great height—nearly seven feet—by a slight twitching of his head and his right hand

and by a mole on his right cheek. The man read the letter aloud in a barber's shop, and almost immediately after Peter entered the room. Of course the news was spread abroad, but, happily for Peter, a large number of people refused to believe it. On Thursday he sailed up the Zaan and visited some wind-mills. One of these was of a new kind, and the Tsar himself worked at some details of it. In consequence of this it is still called "The Great Prince."

The same day Peter purchased from Dick Hoffel, for four hundred and fifty florins, a sailing yacht with all the necessary equipment. He got it ready for service, and made a new bowsprit for it, which we are told was an excellent piece of work. On Friday he was on the water as early as 4 a.m., sailing on the Vorzaan and the Y, and again in the afternoon. He naturally attracted a great crowd, but he knew how to defend himself. A man went up to him and stared him in the face, but immediately received a violent blow on the head. "Well done, Marsje," his friends cried; "you are dubbed a knight." And he was always called "The Knight" from that day. The crowd became so great that Peter shut himself up in an inn and only returned to Zaandam in the dusk of the evening.

On Saturday a large ship was to be launched, and Cornelius Calf, the ship-builder, promised to reserve for Peter an enclosure with palisade and a guard; but the crowds who arrived from Amsterdam threw down the palisade and drove away the guard. The mayor went to fetch the Tsar, but he refused to come, saying there were too many people. So the launch took place without him, and the Amsterdamers returned disappointed. On the Sunday the crowds became worse than ever; the town was fuller than at the fair. The Tsar did not dare to go out, and flew into a great passion. At last, with great difficulty, they got him on board his yacht about one in the afternoon. A

violent storm now arose ; the yacht's cable parted ; the vessel, drifted into mid-stream, was in danger of sinking. Peter would listen to no remonstrances, but sailed to Amsterdam, which he reached in safety. It thus happened that Peter only stayed in Zaandam a week, although the legends of his whole sojourn have especially clustered round this place.

At Amsterdam Peter made the acquaintance of the Burgomaster Nicholas Witsen, with whom he had previously corresponded, and who had a very high reputation in his own city, having written an important book on Northern and Eastern Tartary. Witsen was one of the directors of the East India Company, and was therefore able to arrange that Peter should have a lodging in their dockyard, and should take part in the construction of a frigate, a hundred feet long, from its inception to its conclusion. The moment Peter heard of this he set out for Zaandam in the middle of the night to get his tools, and left without bidding good-bye to any one. It must have been a great disappointment to him to find his first plans so completely thwarted ; but, on a calm review of circumstances, he could not have expected anything else. Before he began his work he consented to be present at a great sham fight, organised by the East India Company, and followed by a banquet. Peter was beside himself with delight. He steered his ship into the thick of the firing, and could not find words to express his pleasure.

The next day he established himself in the East India Docks ; and here he worked for four months and a half. He lived in a small house with Prince Bagration and Count Apráxin, afterwards Grand Admiral of Russia. He rose very early, had no regular hours for meals, lighted his own fire and cooked his own food, living like a simple carpenter. His master was the " Baas " or " Boss," Gerrit Claes Pool. He did not encourage visitors. One day an English-

man of distinction, either Marlborough or Portland, went to the docks to see him at work. The "baas," in order to point him out, said to him, "Peter, carpenter of Zaandam, help those men to carry that wood." And he instantly obeyed.

Not content with carpentering, Peter wished to take lessons in mathematics and navigation, and to learn the designing of vessels. For this purpose Witsen introduced him to the best masters. Witsen himself gave up all his Mondays to the Tsar. Also, that he might study astronomy, the Government of Amsterdam constructed an observatory and invited a famous astronomer from Rotterdam to instruct him.

Peter did not altogether forget his first love, Zaandam. He sent several of his suite to learn there, and assisted at the launch of a ship from the wharf, examining the process with great attention. He found, however, that the process of letting down the ship with ropes was long and tedious, and he did not wait to see it completed. Peter's note-books written at this time have been preserved, and show the industry with which he worked. He also had a good many letters to answer, as all important matters from home were referred to him. He tried to devote one day a week to public business, but he told Vinius that, either from absence, or laziness, or dissipation, he could not always manage it. He was the first to communicate to the Government of Moscow the glorious victory of Prince Eugene over the Turks at Zenta. For this he ordered thanksgivings and *Te Deums* in Russia, and a banquet at the Dutch Embassy.

Peter also did his best to induce William III. to join the alliance against Turkey, but William probably thought that Louis XIV. was a worse enemy to the freedom of Europe than any Turk would be. William was now at Loo, engaged in the negotiations which led to the peace of Ryswick. He willingly consented

to an interview with the Tsar, which it was agreed should be quite private, without etiquette. They met at Utrecht at the end of August, Peter being accompanied by Witsen and Lefort. No account of their conversation has been preserved, but a medal was struck to commemorate the occurrence.

Peter had some difficulty in keeping his suite in order. One of them, who had allowed himself to criticise Peter's conduct, and had begged him to have a little more respect for his dignity, was thrown into irons, and would have been put to death if the Burgo-master had not intervened. Another, who indulged to excess in spirituous liquors, was obliged to turn the wheel of a rope-walk until the skin was rubbed off his hands. After executing these duties he made a journey to the Texel, talking to those who accompanied him of the siege of Azof, and making a drawing of the place, which is still preserved in Amsterdam. When he was there he had the good fortune to see the Greenland whale fleet enter the harbour, under the pressure of a strong Nor'-wester. They had experienced extraordinary good fortune, having taken no less than one thousand one hundred and ninety-seven whales, a number far beyond the average.

He was able afterwards to learn the details of this sport at Zaandam, where he saw the making of the oil, and other operations. He was in excellent humour, and seemed to have got over his shyness, whereas he was of course now less an object of curiosity than before. He frequently visited Zaandam in his yacht. An eye-witness tells us that at this time he was tall and strong, neither very thin nor very fat, alert, quick and ready in all his movements, his face round, the expression a little hard, with brown eyebrows, and short, curly hair. He generally wore a grey coat, a red shirt, and a moleskin cap. He walked with long strides, swinging his arms, and holding in each hand the new handle of an axe, the predecessors of

the *doubina*, or cane, which was at a later period such an object of terror.

It was now time for the Russian Embassy to be solemnly received at The Hague, and Peter was anxious to witness the ceremony in the strictest incognito. The Burgomaster Witsen, with two other persons, went to fetch him. Peter insisted that his dwarf should make one of the party. Witsen objected that the carriage would only hold four. "Then," said Peter, "he can sit upon my knee." He asked questions about everything he saw, especially about the use of the windmills. He constantly insisted upon getting out to see them. Once he found the mill shut, and no one to open it. At another time he got up to his ankles in water, and returned drenched to the carriage.

At Haarlem, when he found that it was impossible to drive round the town outside the walls, he wrapped his head in his cloak, that he might neither see nor be seen. He then passed a country house and wished to visit it. The proprietor was willing to allow him, but Peter insisted that he should leave the house first. Out of respect to Witsen the owner consented. In the meantime night had fallen, and they could see nothing. Peter felt the carriage receive a slight shock, and asked what it was. They told him that they were passing a river on a bridge of boats. He insisted upon inspecting it. Lanterns were brought, the length and breadth of the bridge were measured, until the lanterns were put out by the wind. No wonder that they did not reach The Hague till eleven o'clock at night.

They took the Tsar to an hotel, where a most comfortable bed, in the best room, had been prepared for him. He refused to sleep there, and had his camp-bed placed in an attic. No sooner had he retired than he insisted on having the horses harnessed again to take him to the Embassy. Here again he disdained

a comfortable bed, and finding a servant sleeping on a bear's skin, kicked him off, and lay down there himself. On the day of the audience Peter was dressed in a blue coat with gold ornaments, a fair wig, and a hat with white feathers. He waited in a neighbouring room, and the Embassy did not arrive. "They are late," said the Tsar, and wanted to go away, more especially as the members of the States-General, assembled in the Audience Chamber, would persist in looking at him. He could not leave without crossing the Audience Chamber, so he told Witsen to order their High Mightinesses not to look at him. Witsen said that he could not order them because they were the sovereigns of the country, but that he would ask them. They replied that they would consent to get up in the presence of the Tsar, but that they could not turn their backs on him. Upon this Peter crammed his wig over his face, rapidly crossed the hall of audience and the vestibule, and ran down the staircase.

Holland was at this time governed by very remarkable men, who afterwards became prominent in the War of the Spanish Succession. William III., King of England, was stadtholder, Anton Heinsius, one of the wisest statesmen that the world has ever seen, was Grand Pensionary of Holland, Francis Fagel was greffier, and James Hop was treasurer. William and Heinsius had several private conferences with Peter, in which all ceremony was dispensed with. Peter was present at the grand dinner given to the Embassy on October 1st. He appeared there as a simple *attaché*, and was placed between Witsen and Fagel. Peter was so impressed with the organisation of the Dutch Ministry that he took it for the model of his own. We can believe that no one attracted the attention of the Tsar more powerfully than the great engineer, Coehorn, the rival of Vauban. Peter naturally invited him to enter his service, but Coehorn, as

naturally, refused. At Delft Peter had the opportunity of seeing the great inventor Leeuwenhoek, and spent two hours in examining his microscope. At Leyden, also, he visited the celebrated Doctor Boerhaven, and attended the dissection of a dead body.

On his return from The Hague, Peter lived for some time quietly in the dockyard. The vessel of which he had seen the commencement was now nearly completed, and the Tsar had seen every portion of it in process of construction. When the ship was finished Witsen offered it to Peter in the name of the city of Amsterdam. Peter was so delighted that he threw himself on Witsen's neck. He accepted the present with gratitude, and gave the vessel the name of the *Amsterdam*. Gerrit Musel, the captain of Peter's yacht, was placed in command of it, and in the following year took it to Archangel, with many of Peter's purchases on board. It was preserved for some time with great veneration, first at Archangel, and then at St. Petersburg, but was accidentally burnt in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth.

Strange stories are told of Peter's habits at this time, in which it is difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood. Unhappily, there were then no illustrated or comic newspapers. Peter liked sculling, but he did not like being looked at, and resorted to strange contrivances to avoid it. Once he dragged his boat overland from one canal to another; once he threw empty bottles at the crew of another boat. His curiosity was indefatigable, his courage went even to rashness, and woe betide the suite if they showed less courage than their master. He loved to frequent the butter-market, and to watch the tricks of the traders. An itinerant dentist who could extract teeth with anything—the handle of a spoon, the point of a sword—especially attracted him.

Peter loved all unusual dexterity. He took lessons in the art of tooth-drawing, and practised upon the members

of his suite. He also delighted in the buffooneries of a favourite clown, whom he wished to carry off to St. Petersburg. Grave and gay were curiously mixed in his pursuits. He visited all the churches, and made special inquiries into the difference of religious persuasions. He seems to have had some sympathy with all except the Jews. Peter refused to let them settle in Russia; and for very good reasons. He feared lest their habits of business and general commercial acuteness should give them an undue advantage over the simple-minded Russians, which has certainly proved to be the case. He also observed minutely all the circumstances attending an execution, from the reading of the judgment to the carrying out of the sentence.

He could also show, on occasion, that he was king. He received at Amsterdam the news of a victory gained by Shérin over the Tartars. He gave a *fête* which comprised a dinner, a concert, a ball, a grand illumination, and fireworks. Witsen said that the guests were treated in a manner truly regal. One of the dances was the representation of an execution by two Circassians, which lasted an hour and a half, and was perhaps more quaint than agreeable. During the whole of the evening Peter was in the highest spirits.

Peter frequently visited Zaandam, where his house was occupied by some Russian volunteers, but where a room was kept for him. He generally passed the evening with Cornelius Calf, in whose company he took great delight. Among other friends were the two Louwers, Peter the maker of compasses, and Simon the constructor of windmills.

With all this Peter was not satisfied. He tells us in the preface to the "Maritime Regulations" that he had requested his teacher Pool, to instruct him in the science of proportions with regard to ship-building, and that he had done this. "But because there was

in Holland no geometrical foundation for this art, and they only proceeded by rule of thumb, which could only be learnt by the practice of long years, and because Pool was not able to teach him by drawing, it was very unpleasant to the Tsar to have travelled so far and not to have reached the desired goal."

It happened that at this very time the Tsar went to pay a visit to a merchant named Jan Terring at his country house, and being out of spirits for the reasons above mentioned, when asked, in the course of conversation, what made him so sad, he explained the cause. An Englishman, who happened to be present, said that in England ship-building was carried to the highest perfection, and that the art could be learnt there in a very short time. This statement pleased the Tsar very much. He travelled to England immediately, and completed his studies in four months.

This desire for scientific knowledge was nothing new. In 1694 he had asked Witsen to send him exact information about the dimensions and proportions of different ships, but had received an answer that this was not possible, because every ship-builder followed his own design. The confidence that he previously had in Dutch ship-builders was now completely shattered. He wrote at the end of 1697 to his agent in Vorónezh about the stupidity of the Dutch, and that the Dutch workmen in his employ were to do nothing except under the control of English and Venetian artisans. Peter is also reported to have said that if it had not been for the instruction which he received in England he would have remained nothing better than a carpenter.

He received at this time a magnificent present from William III., in the shape of the king's best yacht, the *Transport Royal*. It was light and of beautiful proportions, and was armed with twenty brass cannon. It had just been constructed on a new plan, and

Caermarthen, who sent it to Russia, spoke of it as the best and quickest vessel in England. Peter sent an envoy to England to carry his thanks to William, and to ask leave to visit England, requesting that his incognito might be preserved as far as possible. William replied by sending two ships of war and two yachts to convoy the Tsar across.



PETER (AGED 26).

Painted for William III. in 1698 by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

There was now a hard frost, which it was said the Russians had brought with them, so that the season was not propitious for visiting the English fleet. So Peter had to content himself with ordinary amusements. He went to the theatre, where he sat behind his suite in order not to attract attention, to a masquerade, to the Royal Society, the Tower, the Mint, and the Observatory at Greenwich. He used to sup with Lord Caermarthen at a tavern near the Tower, which is still called the "Czar of Mnscovy." He also had his portrait painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller. He attended a sitting of Parliament, and watched the proceedings through a small window. He is said to have expressed his disapproval of the limitations placed on the Royal power by Parliament. On visiting Westminster Hall he saw a number of people in wigs and gowns, and asked who they were. Being told that they were lawyers he cried, "What! all these lawyers! Why I have only two in my dominions, and I intended to hang them when I get back."

As in Holland, Peter took pains to associate with distinguished divines. He paid a visit to the Archbishop of Canterbury, attended the service of the English Church, and also a Quaker meeting. Bishop Burnet saw him frequently, and has left a very unfavourable account of him, in his History of his own time.

"I waited often on him, and was ordered, both by the king and the archbishop and bishops, to attend upon him, and to offer him such information of our religion and constitution as he was willing to receive; I had good interpreters, so I had much free discourse with him; he is a man of a very hot temper, soon inflamed, and very brutal in his passion. He raises his natural heat by drinking much brandy, which he rectifies himself with great application: he is subject to convulsive motions all over his body, and his head seems to be affected with these: he wants not capacity

and has a larger measure of knowledge than might be expected from his education, which was very indifferent ; a want of judgment, with an instability of temper, appear in him too often and too evidently. He is mechanically turned and seems designed rather by nature to be a great ship carpenter than a great prince. This was his chief study and exercise while he stayed here : he wrought much with his own hands, and made all about him work at the models of ships ; he told me he designed a great fleet at Azuph, and with it to attack the Turkish Empire : but he did not seem capable of conducting so great a design, though his conduct in his wars since this has discovered a greater genius in him than appeared at that time. He was desirous to understand our doctrine, but he did not seem disposed to mend matters in Muscovy ; he was, indeed, resolved to encourage learning, and to polish his people by sending some of them to travel in other countries, and to draw strangers to come and live among them. He seemed apprehensive still of his sister's intrigues. There is a mixture both of passion and severity in his temper. He is resolute, but understands little of war, and seems not at all inquisitive in that way. After I had seen him often, and had conversed much with him, I could not but adore the depth of the providence of God, that had raised up such a furious man to so absolute an authority over so great a part of the world."

When the weather became better Peter made many excursions on the Thames. He also removed from London to Deptford and occupied Sayes Court, the house of John Evelyn, the author of "*Sylva*," which was then let furnished, to the famous Admiral Benbow. Evelyn's servant wrote to him :—

"There is a house full of people and right nasty. The Tsar lies next your library, and dines in the parlour next your study. He dines at ten o'clock and at six at night, is very seldom at home a whole day,

very often in the King's Yard "[the Dockyard]," or by water, dressed in several dresses. The King is expected there this day; the best parlour is pretty clean for him to be entertained in. The King pays for all he has." After Peter's departure Evelyn writes in his diary, "I went to Deptford to see how miserably the Tsar had left my house after three months making it his court. I got Sir Christopher Wren, the King's surveyor, and Mr. London, his gardener, to go and estimate the repairs, for which they allowed £350 in their report to the Lord of the Treasury."

In his visit to the Dockyard at Deptford Peter enlarged the knowledge which he had already acquired in Holland, and learned the general theoretical principles of ship-building. He also made excursions to Woolwich, where he paid especial attention to the magnificent arsenal, assisted at all kinds of experiments with new bombs and cannon, and visited the workmen in the laboratory. He went to Portsmouth on March 20th to see some naval manœuvres. When there he was particularly interested in the iron hammers, the docks, and the bridges. He also was able to examine some ships of war with great minuteness. He admired the skill of the English sailors in the manœuvres more than what he had seen in Holland.

On his return from Portsmouth he visited Southampton, Windsor, and Hampton Court. He also went to Oxford, where he was invested with the degree of Doctor of Law. Peter naturally engaged a number of English workmen to assist him in Russia, and for this purpose he summoned Golovin from The Hague. He also concluded a convention with Lord Caermarthen by which England, on a payment of £2000, was allowed to import three thousand barrels of tobacco into Russia every year. In the course of the negotiations Caermarthen suggested that perhaps the Patriarch might forbid the use of tobacco, and that the convention would then be useless. Peter replied that

clerics had no right to meddle in the affairs of this world. It was the Patriarch's duty to look after the Faith, but not after the tariffs.

Peter had come to England expecting to stay only a short time, but he found so much to interest and attract him that he repeatedly deferred his departure, in spite of the disquieting rumours which reached him from the capital. The impression made by Peter became more favourable as time went on. William spoke of him with increasing respect. Count Auersperg the Imperial ambassador, writes to his master :—

“As concerns the person of the Tsar, the Court here is well content with him, for he is not now so afraid of people as he was at first. They accuse him of a certain stinginess only, for he has been in no way lavish. All the time here he went about in sailor's clothing. We shall see in what dress he presents himself to your Imperial Majesty. He saw the King very rarely, as he did not want to change his manner of life, dining at eleven o'clock in the morning, supping at seven in the evening, going to bed early, and getting up at four o'clock, which very much astonished those Englishmen who kept company with him.” Peter, on his side, certainly formed a very high opinion, both of England and of the English people.

Before his departure he saw the King in the House of Lords give his consent to a Bill for raising money by a land tax. Peter watched the proceedings through a hole in the roof, and some witty person remarked that he had seen the rarest thing in the world, a king on the throne, and an emperor on the roof. He made his final visit to William on April 18th, and there is a story, told by Coxe, that on bidding good-bye, he took out of his pocket a wisp of brown paper and gave it to the King. William opened it and found in it an uncut diamond of very large size. He sailed from England on April 21st, but, being delayed by stormy winds, could not reach Holland for several days.

CHAPTER XIII.

PETER'S RETURN HOME.

PETER had good reason for wishing to get home as soon as possible. At Moscow there was always the possibility of disturbance, with so dangerous an element as the Streltsi, and the recollection of the reign of Sophia. Also in Poland there was an anti-Russian party amongst the aristocracy. It was reported, too, that the Emperor was about to make peace with the Turks, without considering Russian interests. All this made Peter anxious to have an interview with the Emperor Leopold. We may suppose, too, that he cherished a hope that he might possibly get to Venice, where he could learn the art of building galleys.

On leaving Holland a part of the Embassy travelled direct to Vienna ; but Peter proceeded more leisurely. He first went to Cleves, where the representatives of the Elector of Brandenburg showed him the new plantation in the park, and where he cut his name in a birch tree. At Bielefeld he paid particular attention to the manufacture of linen. He then travelled by Minden, Hildesheim, Halberstadt and Halle. He stayed a day at Leipzig, and it was remarked that he seemed to care more for the society of common than of fashionable people.

He entered Dresden on June 1st at eleven o'clock at night. He had forbidden all ceremonies of reception, and rode in the fourth carriage of the *cortège* to avoid being recognised. When he arrived at the house of

Dinglinger, the famous jeweller, which had been prepared for him, he was taken up a private staircase, and was so much disgusted at being seen by several persons that he was very nearly leaving the city at once. It was with great difficulty that they persuaded him to take supper, which somewhat calmed him. Without going to bed he insisted upon visiting the treasures of the Green Vaults, where he remained all night, paying special attention to the mathematical instruments, and to the specimens of curious handicraft of which Dinglinger was a master.

The next day he invited some Saxon cavalry officers to dine with him, and after dinner he visited the Arsenal with them. Here he subjected the cannon to the closest examination, and if he discovered any fault he not only understood it at once, but gave the reason for it, and that with such knowledge of principles that he excited the wonder of all who listened to him. The Elector of Saxony was now in Poland, of which country he was king, so that Peter paid only a short visit of ceremony to the Electress-mother, but spent several hours in the art collections. In the evening he supped with Prince Egon of Fürstenburg. Here he had the opportunity of seeing the beautiful Aurora, Countess of Königsmark, the mistress of the Elector, and the mother of the Maréchal Maurice de Saxe. Some music was played, but Peter was in such good humour that he took a drum and beat it to such perfection that he far surpassed the regular drummers.

On June 3rd Peter reviewed the Cadets and saw them exercise. He then visited the casting-house and the art collection for a second time. He supped again with Fürstenburg, and gave another concerto on the drum, after which he took his leave and drove off to Königstein. He inspected the fortress with great attention, and observed the effect of throwing hand-grenades from the wall. Undoubtedly the Dresden

officials were glad to get rid of him, for he was both troublesome and costly. Peter did not stop at Prague, but arrived at Stockerau on June 11th, where he had to wait until the arrangements for the reception of himself and the Embassy were completed. Quarters had also been prepared for him at Freiburg, the centre of the Saxon mining district, but he made no use of them.

The reception of a Russian Embassy in Vienna was regarded with interest by the whole of Europe, and we find traces of this anxiety in the Papal and Venetian archives. At the same time the ceremonial with which a comparatively new Power was to be received by the Court which claimed to stand at the summit of the European system took a considerable time to arrange. At last the solemn entry took place, on June 16th. It was remarked that the equipage and liveries of Brandenburg were far superior to those of the Emperor. The Imperial Court paid three thousand guldens a week for the maintenance of the Russian mission. A thousand guldens a day had been offered, but Peter refused it as excessive. The public audience of the Embassy was deferred for nearly a month, because the present destined for the Emperor had not arrived.

In the meantime the Tsar and the Emperor had a private interview in a gallery of the Favorita. It is not known whether they talked politics or not, but the event provided excellent material for the diplomatic newsmongers of that day. They spoke of the convulsive movements in the Tsar's face and body, which formed so prominent a part of his personality, and were ascribed to poison taken in early youth. Their accounts are, on the whole, favourable. The Venetian relator says that the Tsar's journey, undertaken without a definite diplomatic object, and mainly for the purpose of self-improvement, is without a parallel in history, and the papal nuncio reports

that Peter has wide attainments in geography and history, with the desire to acquire more, but that his main devotion is to mechanics.

This private interview was succeeded by a theatrical representation in the Favorita, at which the Tsar was present. He also visited the Arsenal, the Library, and the art collections, and was received by the Empress and by Joseph, King of the Romans. The personal relations of the two sovereigns were friendly enough, but Peter could not persuade Leopold to agree with his views about Turkey. Peter was for war with Turkey, Leopold for peace. Indeed, the financial condition of the Empire at this time was by no means satisfactory. It had been much exhausted by the Turkish war, and ministers were satisfied with having driven the enemy who threatened their capital back to the place from which he came. Peter expressed an intention to demand Kertch, in the Crimea, from the Turks, and asked the Emperor to consider the refusal equivalent to a declaration of war; but the Austrian ministers replied with caution.

On June 29th, the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, Peter's name-day, the Russians gave a magnificent entertainment to a thousand persons. There was a ball, with music and fireworks, and the feast lasted all night. It is worthy of mention that on that morning Peter attended the Catholic service, and heard a sermon from a Jesuit which expressed the wish that the Tsar might receive, like another Peter, the keys to open and to conquer the Turkish Empire. On July 11th there was a fancy dress ball at Court of the kind called "*Wirthschaft*" or "*Tavern*" in which the dresses of different nationalities were represented. Peter appeared in the dress of a Friesland shepherd, and, we are told, danced without end or measure.

On July 18th came the solemn audience of the Embassy. The Tsar officiated as one of the *attachés*.

The Emperor asked Lefort about the health of his master, and received the answer that when they left Moscow he was very well. At the banquet which followed, Peter stood behind Lefort's chair. Hungarian wine formed the subject of conversation, and an Austrian present sent a salver to Lefort with six different kinds for trial. After he had tasted all of them, he asked permission to give some to his friend, who was standing behind his chair, and who was no other than the Tsar himself.

There was nothing now to hinder Peter from starting for Venice, a place which he had a great desire to visit, and where great preparations had been made to receive him. Some of his suite had already left for the Adriatic. The arsenal of Venice had been put into order, and the number of the workmen increased. It was in contemplation to found six cannon in the presence of the Tsar, bearing complimentary inscriptions. The nuncio wrote on July 16th that Peter was starting for Italy that very day. He did leave Vienna on July 19, but for Moscow and not for Venice. Lefort and Golovin accompanied him. What terrible news had produced this sudden change of plan?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REVOLT AND PUNISHMENT OF THE STRELTSI.

THE reason for Peter's sudden change of intention was the receipt of a letter from Ramodanófsky, saying that the Streltsi regiments on the frontier had revolted and marched on Moscow, and that Generals Shéin and Gordon had been despatched to put them down. As the letter had been a whole month on the road, Peter knew nothing of what had happened in the interval. It was possible that the Streltsi had captured Moscow, and that the Princess Sophia was reigning in his place. He therefore determined to travel home day and night. He did not even stay in Cracow, where a State dinner had been prepared for him. Now, however, he received news that things were quieter; therefore he had time to inspect the salt-mines of Wieliczka, and the Polish army, which was encamped at Bochnia. At the little village of Rava he stayed from July 31st to August 3rd. Here took place an important interview with the King of Poland, which entirely changed the course of Peter's policy. He conceived a deep affection for Augustus "the physically strong," and was induced by him to give up the war with Turkey and to turn his arms against Sweden.

The three days were spent in secret conferences and boisterous pleasures, mixed with reviews of troops and military evolutions. The two sovereigns took a mutual fancy to each other, exchanged clothes

and arms, and swore eternal friendship. The Jesuit Votta, who was present at this interview, and whom Peter had known in Moscow, has left us the report of an eye-witness. He tells us also that Peter talked to him about an alliance between Russia, Poland, and Saxony against Turkey, and said that they must first kill the bear and then divide the skin. Votta also says that Peter attended the Catholic service with great devotion, and received the blessing with humility.

Peter then went to Zamosc, where the Papal nuncio for Poland had taken pains to meet him. He did his best to interest Peter in favour of the Catholics, and induced him to allow Catholic missionaries to pass through Russia on their way to China. Although he could be tolerant to other churches, he would not suffer any insult to his own, and at Brzesc-Litewski, when Zolewski, the metropolitan of the Uniates, spoke disrespectfully of the Russian Christians, he ordered him to be immediately removed, for fear he should be tempted to lay violent hands upon him. The journey from Brzesc-Litewski to the capital took a fortnight. The travellers reached Moscow on August 25th. Peter, true to his character of *attaché*, first conducted Lefort and Golovin to their houses and then retired to Preobrazhensk.

Peter at once threw himself with passionate energy into the investigation of what had been the cause of his sudden return, the revolt of the Streltsi. The Streltsi, as we have already read, had been used as the instruments of previous rebellions. They had swelled the force of rebellion under Sténka Rázin; they had brought about a revolution in 1682; they had supported Sophia against Peter in 1689. They had not been disregarded by Zichler in the conspiracy of 1697. But the days of their influence were numbered. It was necessary, for Peter's purposes, to turn the Streltsi into ordinary soldiers. They had an important

past, but no future. They had nothing to lose by rebellion, and they might gain something. They also had good reason for discontent. They had been compelled to take an inferior position. The new regiments, drilled according to foreign principles, and commanded by foreigners, were far more efficient, and were accorded a corresponding position in the manoeuvres. In the campaigns of Azof the Streltsi had suffered severely. Their obstinacy and unhandiness had frequently excited Peter's wrath, and punishment was dealt out to them in no sparing measure. A great many of them were killed, and it was believed that their officers took no particular pains to preserve them from destruction.

In the good old times the armies used to break up and return home when the campaign was over. This was now all changed. After the capture of Azof, Peter ordered several regiments to remain there, whereas others returned to Moscow, thus creating jealousy. After Zichler's conspiracy endeavours were made to remove the Streltsi altogether from the capital. Several regiments were sent to the Don, in the South of Russia, to guard the frontiers against the Tartars; others were ordered to the frontiers of Poland and Lithuania. The Streltsi were dispersed, but their wives and families remained in Moscow. Some Streltsi regiments had served for three years without a holiday. They complained of bad food and cruel discipline. They saw no remedy but in mutiny. It is not easy to determine precisely what they wanted, but it is obvious that they protested energetically against the employment of foreigners. In their manifesto of 1698 they complained that the heretic Lefort had sacrificed them to no purpose in the most dangerous place under the walls of the besieged fortress. They gloried in the fact that they were standing in defence of the true Christian faith and rising against the foreigners, who shaved their beards and smoked

tobacco. The hatred of "foreign devils" is a common phenomenon in half-civilised races.

It is not easy to ascertain the precise facts about this revolt, as much of the evidence was given under torture, but it seems that the practical objects the Streltsi had in view were, to burn down the German suburb, and to kill all the foreigners in it; to put to death a number of *boyars* who had made themselves personally unpopular; and to place Sophia upon the throne, with Basil Golitsyn as prime minister. Peter was, of course, especially anxious to discover whether his sister Sophia was in any way an accomplice of the plot. There is little evidence one way or the other. It is possible that her attendants were in communication with the wives and families of the Streltsi who were employed in foreign service. She was also well known to be extremely charitable to beggars, and these, who visited her in large numbers, would be useful intermediaries with the external world. But there was nothing to connect her definitely with a design to seize the throne.

In March 1696 a hundred and seventy-five Streltsi appeared in Moscow. They had deserted from some regiments which were marching from Azof to the borders of Lithuania. Unfortunately they were not severely dealt with. They came to Ramodanófsky and complained of bad treatment and insufficient pay. The heads of the deputation were arrested, but on the way to prison were liberated by their companions. The government, in their embarrassment, turned for advice to Gordon, who regarded the matter as of slight importance, and advised that the mutineers should be allowed to return to their regiments. It is possible that these Streltsi may, during their stay at Moscow, have communicated with Sophia. Some of them declared, under torture, that she had written them a letter urging them to march upon Moscow to liberate her from her monastery, and to restore

her to the government ; but the existence of this letter is very doubtful. It was also said that she spread a report that, having heard nothing from the Tsar for a long time, it was doubtful whether he would ever return from abroad. It is certain that communication with Peter often ceased for a long period, and that the Government was much embarrassed in consequence.

Some weeks had passed when Ramodanófsky committed an act of ill-timed severity, worse than his previous leniency. He ordered that the deserters, who had now joined their regiments in Toropétz should be given up. Also the army was to be broken up, and the Streltsi were to be dispersed in some small frontier towns. Some few Streltsi who disobeyed these orders were arrested, but were immediately liberated by their companions. They absolutely refused to surrender the deserters. The younger Ramodanófsky, who appeared upon the spot with the local militia, was unable to restore order. He gave the Streltsi their arrears of pay, but this produced no effect. The agitation became worse. The deserters did their best to corrupt their companions in self-defence, and they read the letter of the Princess Sophia mentioned above, the genuineness of which is extremely uncertain. They determined to march on Moscow, and to carry out the programme of which we have before given an account.

The danger was undoubtedly very great. The principal inhabitants of Moscow fled with their possessions. The Government, being in a state of "consternation," as Gordon tells us, sent for him. He immediately took the field against the Streltsi, together with Shéin, who commanded the regular troops. On the road Gordon was informed that the mutineers were preparing to occupy the Vozkresénsky Monastery, about thirty miles from Moscow. He contrived to get before them, and to cut them off from the

monastery, which they might easily have converted into a strong fortress. Partly from humanity, and partly from a desire to gain time, Gordon went more than once into the camp of the Streltsi, to persuade them to submit. They seemed to have had no idea of the danger in which they stood. New troops were continually coming up, and were being placed in such positions by Gordon and by the Austrian artillery officer Krahe, that there could be no doubt of the result.

On the morning of June 18th all arrangements were completed. Gordon rode into the camp of the Streltsi for the last time, using, as he says, all the rhetoric of which he was capable to dissuade them from marching upon Moscow ; but in vain. He gave them a quarter of an hour for consideration, and then returned to his army. As a last resource Prince Koltsóf-Massálsky addressed them, but could produce no effect. The mutineers were entirely surrounded. Gordon first fired a salvo of twenty-five guns over their heads. This only served to encourage them. They beat their drums, and waved their banners, their priests chanted prayers, and they marched to the attack.

The struggle then begun. It lasted only an hour. A few of the Streltsi were killed : the rest fled, but were captured. The actual number of those who were killed, or who died of their wounds, was seventy ; rather more than two hundred were punished immediately, and nineteen hundred and eighty seven were reserved for the vengeance of the Tsar. Vinius wrote to Peter : " Not one got away ; the worst of them were sent on the road to the dark life with the news of their brethren to those already there, who, I think, are imprisoned in a special place ; for Satan, I imagine, fears lest they may get up a rebellion in hell, and drive him out of his realms."

Peter, on receiving news of this revolt, at once

estimated its importance. He wrote an answer to Ramodanófsky : " You wrote that the seed of Miloslávsky is springing up again." He knew that it meant reaction against his plans for the regeneration of his country. The danger threatened the very kernel of his designs. In his eyes the Streltsi were the instruments of a party with whom he had to reckon once for all. He therefore determined to probe the matter to the bottom with all the force of his personal will. Gordon writes on September 17th 1698, that " he desires to act with greater severity than has been previously shown." Peter undertook the personal examination of the prisoners, and the details of what passed, related by eye-witnesses of unimpeachable veracity, go beyond anything of the kind in the history of modern Europe.

There were at this time three kinds of torture in use in Russia—those of the rod, the knout, and the fire. In the torture of the *batóg*, or rod, a man was held down by two persons, one at his head and another at his feet, who struck at his bare back with little rods about the thickness of the finger, " keeping time as smiths do at an anvil, until their rods are broken in pieces ; and then they take fresh ones, until they are ordered to stop."

The knout is a thick, hard thong of leather, of about three feet and a half long, with a ring or handle at the end of it to which the thong is fastened. The executioner strikes the criminal so many strokes on the bare back as are appointed by the judge, taking a step backwards and giving a spring forwards at every stroke, which is delivered with such force that the blood flies and leaves a wheal behind it as thick as a man's finger. The " masters," as the Russians call them, are so expert at their work that they very rarely strike two blows in the same place, but lay them on the whole length and breadth of a man's back, by the side of each other, from the top of the shoulders to the waist. Sometimes the torture of

the knout was made worse by the prisoner being hoisted up by a rope, with a heavy weight attached to his feet, so that he hung with his shoulders out of joint.

In the torture by fire the man's hands and feet were tied, and he was fixed upon a long pole, like a spit. He then had his raw back roasted over the fire and was called upon to confess. We are told by foreign eye-witnesses that seventeen hundred and seventeen men were examined in this way, and that thirty fires were burning at Preobrazhensk for the purpose.

It is impossible to defend Peter's conduct in these circumstances. He acted with the brutality of an Oriental. But he had a good end in view, and cannot be accused of motives of personal vengeance. His severity seemed excessive, even to the Russians themselves. We are told that the Patriarch, hearing of the terrible things that were going on at Preobrazhensk, went thither with a sacred picture in his hand and urged the Tsar to clemency. Peter replied, "Why do you come here with your picture? Does your office order you to appear here? Begone with you, and take your picture where it will receive honour. Know that I honour God and the Holy Mother no less than yourself. But my highest duty and my piety before God order me to protect my people, and above all to punish crime which will end in the destruction of our nation."

The number of those executed in September and October was about a thousand. They were almost exclusively Streltsi, but amongst them were some few people of a lower rank, and a certain number of priests, who had taken part in the insurrection by conducting a religious service just before the battle of Vozkresensk, and had prayed for the success of the mutineers. They were treated with special severity. A few hundred more were executed in February. It

is tolerably certain that, notwithstanding the stories which were circulated, Peter did not execute any one with his own hands ; but there is also little doubt that he compelled some of the nobles of his court to take part in the executions.

There can be no doubt that these executions, although they served their immediate end, also left a strong sense of resentment amongst the people. Bishop Burnet, on hearing of them, wrote a clear-sighted letter to Witsen, the Burgomaster of Amsterdam, in which, after expressing his horror at the executions, he says that he is afraid that they will stimulate the rebellious spirit rather than allay it. "The children, relations, and friends of those executed will be deeply offended, and the rule '*oderint modo metuant*' is a dangerous one to follow."

In some respects its immediate effect was not successful. Six regiments mutinied in Azof when they heard of the defeat and execution of their comrades. They said that *boyars* were to be found in Moscow, and Germans in Azof, just as devils are found in water and worms in earth. They were especially angry with Shéin, who had defeated their comrades. They seem to have believed, however, that Peter himself had died in foreign parts, and the *boyars* had attempted to kill the Tsarevitch Alexis. A large number of them were imprisoned, tortured, and executed.

There were also many Streltsi established in different towns of Russia who resented the fate of their companions. One of them is reported to have said : "They have killed a large number of our men and banished them to Siberia, but we are still very numerous. We shall show our teeth again, even in Moscow. He who has tortured and branded us will soon be in our hands. We shall know how to deal with him."

In order to prevent schemes of this kind, the

Streltsi were entirely abolished. A decree was issued in June 1699 providing that the remaining sixteen regiments of Streltsi should be disbanded. No member of the Streltsi, nor any one connected with them, was allowed to dwell in the capital. No one who had been a Strelitz was permitted to bear arms, nor might he enter the regular army. Any one who attempted to do so under a false name would be condemned to penal servitude. These measures were so successful that it was possible in the Northern war to form a few regiments out of the former Streltsi, for service in Poland, and to use some others for police purposes in the towns.

CHAPTER XV.

PETER AUTOCRAT.

PETER had evidently come back from his foreign journey in no disposition to be trifled with. He had made up his mind that his duty was to lead Russia into the ways of Western progress, and to make her a member of the family of European nations. In attempting this he was certain to meet strong opposition, and that he was determined to crush with an iron hand. His severity towards the Streltsi is to be explained by the fact that the cause of their mutiny was precisely that which would make him most angry, their hatred of his foreign friends and of the German suburb. Similar considerations stimulated his wrath against Sophia. Although there was no evidence to connect her with the plot, he knew that she was the most formidable rallying point for old Russian ideas, and that the retrogressive party looked to her as the Catholics looked to Mary Queen of Scots in the reign of Elizabeth.

It was reported to foreign courts that Peter wished to kill his sister with his own hands on a scaffold erected for the purpose, but this was of course an exaggeration. There is also mention of the summoning of a special commission, composed of two members from all ranks, to try her, and to estimate the amount of her guilt and punishment. Certain it is that Sophia was compelled to take the veil on

October 1st, 1698. She entered the Convent of the Virgin under the name of Susanna, and was guarded by a hundred soldiers. She lived there for fifteen years and a half. Ten days later Peter shut up another sister, Martha, in another convent. He also did the same with his wife. Whilst he was abroad he had endeavoured to persuade Endoxia to take the veil voluntarily. When he returned he found that this had not been done, and was very angry. He endeavoured to persuade her himself, but without success. Three weeks after, her son Alexis, now nearly nine years old, was taken from her, and put under the charge of his aunt Natalia at Preobrazhensk. Endoxia was carried off in a common post-cart to the Pokrófsky convent at Suzdal, where, ten months afterwards, she was compelled to take the veil.

The principal reason for Peter's action was undoubtedly Endoxia's attachment to old Russian ways, and the influence that she was likely to exercise over Alexis. The intimate relation which the Tsar formed at this time with Anna Mons, the daughter of a German goldsmith, may have had some share in the catastrophe.

A new epoch for Russia begins with Peter's return. Before his departure he had shown little interest in public affairs ; he now takes the initiative in everything. He is the soul of all movements, either in foreign affairs or in internal reforms. He immediately began the process of entirely changing the character of Russia, of modernising the country in a manner which promised much for the future of the Empire, but which for the moment was bound up with great difficulties and sacrifices, and which trampled under foot many important rights and interests. New surprises made their appearance every day, and many seemed to be only the manifestation of a despotic will.

In this career of change Peter spared no one. The

idea of reforming an institution by carefully studying the conditions of its development had in those days no existence. It was a reproach to the reformers before the French Revolution, Joseph II., Aranda, Pombal, Struenzee, that they believed too much in the power of edicts, and thought that commanding a thing to be done was equivalent to doing it. Peter believed in edicts, but he also took care to see them carried out. He acted as a simple autocrat. At the same time, it must be confessed that Peter steered the ship of state into the new waters with a careful hand. Also, there was no element of selfishness in Peter's action. If his predecessors had regarded, as we are told, the ignorance of their subjects as the main foundation-stone of their absolute power, Peter was determined to discard such contemptible considerations, and to run the risk of reigning with less authority over a nation of educated and enlightened citizens.

Peter's first attack was upon Russian beards. At this time any one who wore his hair in the foreign fashion, and shaved his beard, was threatened with the ban of the Church. In the reign of Alexis a prince had been deprived of his office because he had done this. In 1681 the Patriarch threatened to excommunicate, not only all those who shaved their beards, but all who had intercourse with such people. Adrian, on his accession to the Patriarchate, published a circular in which he denounced the habit of shaving as flying in the face of Providence. He said that any one without a beard did not look like a man, but like a dog or a tom-cat; that amongst heretics, not only ordinary people, but priests and monks, shaved their beards, and then looked like apes. These fulminations would not have been issued unless the shaving of beards had become more or less a common danger. There were many reasons for believing, both in Russian and in other circles, that Peter was intending, as soon

as he returned, to alter, not only the custom of wearing beards, but the whole of the Russian dress. The *boyars* were very anxious as to what would happen, and they held constant meetings before the arrival of their lord, to discuss what should be done.

As we have said above, Peter arrived at Moscow on August 25th, and went immediately to Preobrazhensk. On the next day a large number of Russians went to pay their respects. Peter was in excellent humour and most affable, and when the visitors, according to the Eastern custom, threw themselves down before him, he raised them up and kissed them. But suddenly the Tsar seized a pair of shears and cut off the beard of Field-Marshal Shéin. He then did the same to many others. We are told by a contemporary: "The Tsar received all that came with an alacrity that seemed to show that he wished to be beforehand with his subjects in eagerness. Those who, according to the fashion of the country, would cast themselves upon the ground to worship Majesty, he lifted up graciously from their grovelling posture, and embraced with a kiss, such as is only due among private friends. If the razor, that plied promiscuously amongst the beards of those present, can be forgiven the injury it did, the Muscovites may truly reckon that day amongst the happiest of their lives. Shéin, general-in-chief of the Tsar's troops, was the first who submitted the incumbrance of his long beard to the razor. Nor can they consider it any disgrace, as their sovereign is the first to show the example. Nor was there anybody left to laugh at the rest. They were all born to the same fate. Nothing but superstitious awe for his office exempted the Patriarch. Prince Michael Tcherkásky was let off, out of reverence for his advanced years, and Tikhon Stréshnef out of the honour due to one who had been guardian to the Tsaritsa. All the rest had to conform to the guise of foreign nations, and the razor eliminated the ancient fashion." Unfortu-

nately we have no account of this occurrence from Russian sources. We do not know whether what was actually done was part of a preconceived design, or the outburst of a sudden whim.

On September 1st, a few days later, the New Year's Day of the Russian calendar, Shéin gave a magnificent banquet. There were present a large number of *boyars*, officials, and military officers, as well as a large number of sailors. With these last the Tsar was on very familiar terms ; he called them brothers, and shared apples with them. There was a great deal of wine drunk, and at every toast there was a salute of artillery. At last Peter's Court fool made his appearance with a large razor, and, with all sorts of antics, shaved a number of those who were present. Any one who resisted was punished by a box on the ear. It is strange that, so far as we know, these extraordinary proceedings did not excite any active opposition.

At a later period decrees were issued that all Russians, except the clergy, were to shave, but that, if any one wished to keep his beard, he must pay a tax. This was fixed at a small sum for the peasantry, but varied from £12 a year to £42 a year for other classes, the merchants paying the highest sum. When they had paid this duty they received a bronze or silver token, which they were bound to wear always about the neck, and to renew every year. The earliest of these tokens preserved dates from 1699.

Perry, in his "State of Russia," tells us : "About this time the Tsar came down to Vorónezh, where I was then on service, and a great many of my men who had worn beards all their lives were now obliged to part with them, amongst whom one of the first that I met with, just coming from the hands of the barber, was an old Russ carpenter that had been with me at Camisbinka, who was a very good workman with his hatchet, and whom I always had a

friendship for. I jested with him a little on this occasion, telling him that he was become a young man, and asked what he had done with his beard. Upon which he put his hand in his bosom and pulled it out and showed it to me; further telling me that when he came home he would lay it up to have it put in his coffin and buried along with him, that he might be able to give an account of it to St. Nicholas, when he came to the other world, and that all his brothers (meaning his fellow workmen who had been shaved that day) had taken the same care."

The restrictions on the wearing of beards by the peasantry and the middle classes soon disappeared, but all public officials were obliged to be shaved until the accession of Alexander II. This gradually became relaxed in practice, but not until 1895 was a decree issued permitting the officers and soldiers of the army to wear their beards when on service; and this was not extended to the Imperial guard. It is certain that after Peter's return all beards disappeared in the higher circle of Russian society, and that wigs began to be worn. It counts for something in this matter that Peter himself had very little beard, and that even his moustache, of which he made the most, was not very luxuriant.

A similar reform was the introduction of European dress, which now demands our attention. The old Russian dress was mainly Oriental in character, and it is obvious that long, flowing robes, with large sleeves, were not suited to the active work of the world. Acute observers have declared that one of the chief difficulties that the Chinese would have in an important war, in which their own existence might be at stake, would lie in their exaggerated admiration for deportment, and their reluctance to do anything which might seem undignified. This feeling is inconsistent with the rough and tumble of a fight. At the same time, clothes are closely connected both with

personal dignity and with moral habits, and it is easy to see how the maintenance of a tradition of ceremonious attire might involve deeper questions than mere conservative prejudice.

A certain Servian, one of the earliest Pan-slavists, who was eager for the extension of Slavonic influences, and for Russia placing herself at the head of the movement, writing some years before Peter's reforms, speaks strongly about the necessity of a change in Russian clothing. He says that it is not beautiful, that it allows no dignity or freedom of motion, and that it gives the impression of slavery, degradation, and cowardice. He thinks it folly that the Russians should imitate the attire of the Tartars and Turks, rather than that of the Europeans. Russians, he says, not only look more like women than men, but, from the absence of pockets, they are obliged to put their knives in their boots, their handkerchiefs in their caps, and their money in their mouths. The sleeves of the Russian dress are long and narrow, so as nearly to prevent all movement, and the trousers are equally uncomfortable, whether for walking or sitting still. A Russian on horseback looks like a piece of wood tied on to a horse's back. The writer also objects to the Oriental splendour, the pearls and silk, the embroidery and costly stuff. He comes to the conclusion that the Russian dress must be changed, and that Russian Ambassadors must not be sent to Europe in their national dress, or the nation will be despised. Also he says that the movement must come from the State, and that it had better begin with the soldiers.

With Peter the beard-reform and the dress-reform were part of one and the same movement. On the day of the solemn entry of the Ambassadors into Moscow no one was allowed to appear except in German dress. We are told that in February 1699, when Peter was giving a carnival entertainment,

noticing that some persons appeared at the feast with very long sleeves to their coats, he cut them off with his own hands, and said that they were very much in the way in every kind of work, that it was easy to upset anything with them and the arms got extremely dirty with food.

About a year afterwards, on January 4th, 1700, a decree was issued ordering all persons belonging to the Court, and its officials, both in Moscow and in the provinces, to wear foreign and indeed Hungarian attire. Every one was to provide himself with dress of this kind before Butterweek, that is, before the carnival. Ladies of the higher classes were also to adopt the foreign dress, and Peter's sisters set the example. As this decree was not obeyed with sufficient alacrity, it was repeated on March 20th and August 20th; the last version extending the order to the peasants. Men were to comply with the order before December 1st, 1701, and women before January 1st, 1701.

The principal reason alleged was the improvement of the army. Patterns of the new dresses were exhibited at the gates of towns, and Perry tells us that all those who disobeyed were forced "to kneel down at the gates of the city, and have their coats cut off just even with the ground, so much as it was longer than to touch the ground when they kneeled down, of which there were many hundreds of coats that were cut accordingly; and being done with a good humour, it occasioned mirth among the people, and soon broke the custom of wearing long coats, especially in Moscow and those towns wherever the Tsar came."

Peter's severity to the Streltsi had made people understand that it was dangerous to disobey him. A decree of 1701 went into minute details. Russian boots, Russian saddles, and Russian knives were forbidden, and offenders were to be punished with fines

and with the knout. Peter further showed his sympathy with Western ideas by encouraging the use of tobacco. The use of this plant had indeed been a passion of the people for at least a hundred years, and we are told that the poorest beggar would give his last farthing for a pinch of snuff. But it was disapproved of by the authority of the Government and the Church. Michael Romanoff forbade smoking and snuff-taking, as well as commerce in tobacco, under pain of death : and Alexis included this prohibition in his book of laws. Many who disobeyed were tortured and mutilated. Even the dissidents declared tobacco to be "a God-forsaken, devilish plant." Peter, by his own use of tobacco, and by his tobacco-treaty with England, changed all this and gave the desires of the people full play.

A more important matter was the reform of the calendar. Up to this time the Russians had followed the Byzantine practice of dating the year from the Creation of the world. It was supposed that the world was created on September 1st, 5508 B.C. Thus the year 1699 was written 7207. On December 20th, 1699 a decree was issued ordering that in future the year should be reckoned from the birth of Christ, and should begin on January 1st. Perry informs us that the opponents of the Tsar argued that the world must have been created, not in winter, but in autumn, when corn and all other fruits of the earth were ripe, but that Peter replied by taking a globe and showing them that all nations were not like Russians, and that in some countries the first of January might be the beginning of autumn ; and also that by the neglect of leap-year the date of the seasons had been gradually changed. In support of his project Peter was able to show that New Year's Day was January 1st in many countries which belonged to the Orthodox Church. Walachia, Moldavia, Servia, Dalmatia and, Bulgaria, not to mention the Little Russians and

the Greeks. A special festival was prepared for the occasion. Besides the usual church service, people were ordered to decorate their houses with branches of trees, to greet each other with a New Year's greeting on January 1st, and to celebrate the day with illuminations, fireworks, and the firing of muskets and cannon.

The minutest details of these festivities were prescribed by Government order. We are told that the firing of guns and the other rejoicings lasted a whole week, till the Epiphany, on which day took place the solemn blessing of the river Moskvá. Here also was an innovation. Peter, instead of sitting on the same throne as the Patriarch, appeared at the head of his regiment, which was furnished, as were the other troops, with new uniforms and new arms, clad in dark green close-fitted coats, with gold buttons, presenting a very respectable appearance.

The new century began for Russia a new era. As the French dated from the epoch of liberty, the Russians might date from the epoch of progress or of secularisation. Peter changed the centre of gravity of the Government from the Church to the army. Up to this time the Muscovite government had been in a certain sense a theocracy. The Tsars were priests as well as kings. Peter in later years protested against the evil effect of Byzantine influences, and declared that there were better examples to imitate than the mediæval Greeks. Perhaps it was this dislike to the continuance of Byzantine tradition which made him less eager to conquer Constantinople. It is a pity that, whilst altering the calendar, he did not adopt the New Style, which was already largely in use. But having been the invention of a Pope, it was intimately connected in people's minds with the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, and probably for that reason was not introduced into England till 1752. Voltaire remarks that Peter would probably

have taken this important step if England had, at that time, shown the way.

Before passing on to political events which are earlier in point of time, it will be well to complete the review of Peter's reforms. The Patriarch Adrian, who, it will be remembered, was appointed against the will of the Tsar, died on October 16th, 1700. There was great difficulty in finding a satisfactory successor. The Patriarchate had existed in Russia since the year 1589. It was not formally abolished till the end of Peter's reign. Still, Peter had experienced enough of it to know that the Church, represented by the Patriarch, was the most formidable opponent of his reforming plans.

At one time the Patriarch had been more powerful than the Tsar. Michael, the first Tsar of the house of Romanoff, was son of the Patriarch Philaret, and it was well known that during his reign the father possessed more influence than the son. Alexis had great difficulty in contending with the pretensions of the Patriarch Nikon. In Peter's reign circumstances were but little changed. It was almost impossible to find a Patriarch who was a friend of progress. If such a one existed he would come from Kíef in Little Russia, and his appointment would excite suspicions of leaning towards the Romish Church.

Peter, therefore, being also at this time much occupied, determined to postpone the appointment for a time. He issued a decree on December 16th, 1700, giving the charge of the Russian Church to Stephen Yavoisky, the metropolitan of Riazín and Múrom, with the title of Exarch, and Administrator of the Patriarchal See. He also created a new department called the Department of Monasteries, which should have charge of that part of the Patriarch's duties which was not strictly ecclesiastical. This included the administration of Church property, all questions of wills and inheritance, marriage, adultery, divorce, dis-

putes between husbands and wives, children and parents, questions of legitimacy and adoption, suits of civilians against ecclesiastics, and of ecclesiastics against civilians. At the head of this department was placed the Boyár Iván Alexéievitch, Músin-Púshkin, an enlightened man, who knew Latin, was acquainted with philosophy and theology, and was a friend of foreigners and learned people. The importance of this step was not seen at once, but it was the beginning of radical reforms in the Russian Church.

Another step in the same direction was the abolition of servile etiquette. At the time of Peter's accession the Tsar was revered as a demi-god. No one dared to approach his palace without uncovering his head. Any one who went into his presence had to throw himself upon the ground. Peter determined to put a stop to these extravagances. He ordered on December 30th, 1701, that no one presenting a petition was to use the diminutive of his name, or to fall on his knees before the Tsar, or to uncover before his palace in the winter time. "Where is the difference between God and the Tsar if like honour is given to both? The honour that I wish for consists in this, that my subjects should crawl before me less, and serve the state with zeal and fidelity more." In opposition to those nobles who surrounded themselves with several hundred retainers, Peter went about with only a small retinue. If he had not been successfully resisted by the wealthy members of his Court he would probably have gone so far as to abolish serfdom.

The collection of Russian edicts is full of orders dating from this period which had a similar end in view. In order to reduce the number of begging friars, he ordered all his subjects to do some work. He diminished the crowd of officials who thronged the public offices, and exacted greater punctuality and more work from those who remained. He introduced into Russia the practice of using stamped paper, and

recommended the formation of commercial companies. He forbade, under the strictest penalties, his soldiers to make use of loud cries and shouts in battle, characteristics of a barbarous people. In imitation of foreign Courts he founded the Order of St. Andrew. He employed foreign priests to make extracts from French, English, and Scotch law, and appointed a commission for the codification of laws.

He also made an attempt at municipal reform, in imitation of what he had seen in foreign countries. At this time the towns were governed by voievodes, who levied exactions of all kinds, and were much amenable to bribery. Peter found that in some parts of Little Russia there existed certain elective institutions of local government. These he determined to extend to the whole Empire. The merchants were permitted to choose men in whom they had confidence to form a council which should have the general charge of municipal affairs. Each of these councillors was to act in turn as president for a month. The new municipalities were placed under the charge of a new department, distinct from the other ministries, and in direct communication with the Tsar. It was called by two names, both of foreign origin, the *Búrmista* (*Burgomaster*) department, or the *Rátuska* (*Rathhaus*). In return for these privileges the merchants had to pay double taxes.

We are told that Peter had the design of rebuilding the palace of the Kremlin in the style of Versailles, which we may be glad that he did not carry out. To some purpose he introduced printing presses, encouraged the translation of foreign works into Russian, and laid the foundation of a general system of education. Perry tells us that in Russia at this time there were not twenty men who could do a decent sum. To establish schools with English teachers, and a School of Navigation with a foreigner at its head, was an important step in advance. He determined also to

create a University and to summon the best professors he could find from foreign countries. He also had a design to introduce foreign play-actors, and he began to build a school for the education of young nobles and to find teachers for them.

Another important change was the reform of the coinage. At this time the only coins actually existing in Russia were little silver kopéks, of the value of a penny, stamped with the figure of St. George on one side, and the name of the Tsar on the other. Other denominations of money, such as the ruble, which was a hundred kopéks, were not coined, but were merely monies of account. In order, therefore, to get small change it was necessary to cut the kopéks into little pieces, or to use bits of stamped leather. Peter determined to coin copper kopéks, of the same value as the silver one, but naturally of enormous size ; also gold single and double ducats, and silver quarter, half, and entire rubles. This made commercial transactions in Russia more easy, and indeed more possible. The new coinage was so far successful that £3,700,000 worth of money was coined in the first three years.

The year 1699, which witnessed many of these changes, also saw the death of Peter's two most intimate friends, whom he dearly loved, and who in their several ways had a very important influence on his career. Lefort died in February. He had been entertaining the envoys of Denmark and Brandenburg, previous to their departure for Vorónezh, whither they were going to see the Tsar's new fleet. The banquet, as usual, was prolonged for many hours, and it was determined to adjourn the drinking to the open air. Lefort caught a severe chill, which resulted in a burning fever, and he died a week later in delirium. Peter hastened back from Vorónezh, where he was superintending the building of his ships, to be present at the funeral. When he heard

of Lefort's death he burst into passionate tears and said, "Now I am left without one trusty man. He alone was faithful to me ; in whom can I confide henceforward ?" It is much to Lefort's credit that with so much money at his command he died almost penniless. Peter took care of his son and nephew, and felt the loss severely for many years afterwards.

Towards the end of the year, November 29th, 1699, General Gordon also died. He was ill only for a short time, but Peter visited him five times, and was with him twice on the last night of his life. He closed his dying eyes with his own hand. The last entry in Gordon's diary is written on the last day of December 1698. He says, as if in anticipation of his approaching end, "In this year I have felt a sensible failing of my health and strength—but Thy will be done, O my gracious God !"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PEACE OF CARLOWITZ.

WE have now reached the important moment when Peter changed the whole course of his foreign policy, by making peace with Turkey and turning his arms against Sweden. It was natural, for many reasons, that the Russians should be the bitter enemies of the Turks, and that they should not rest until they had planted the flag of St. Andrew on the waters of the Bosphorus. The Russians are an intensely religious people, however much their religion may be tainted with superstition, and their enthusiasm would be strongly stirred by the hope of restoring the mosque of Santa Sophia to Christian worship. Also apart from the natural desire to have command over the Black Sea, and to seek a passage into the Mediterranean through the Dardanelles, the Russians cannot but regard themselves as the heirs of the Eastern Empire, and be moved by a powerful impulse to possess the city in which that Empire had its centre. We therefore find, from the days of Philip II., in the middle of the sixteenth century, that those Western potentates, who looked forward to the driving of the Turks out of Europe, expected valuable aid from Russia as an interested Power.

The only difficulty in the way was the semi-barbaric character of the Russians and the Cossacks, and the difficulty of making arrangements with them. This stood in the way of Henry IV., and fifty years

later prevented the advice of Paolo Sarpi from being taken by the senate of Venice. Under Peter, half a century later still, all this was changed. His name was well known in Venice, and the Senate could now, not only express a wish that he might be ruler in Constantinople, but even offer to help him. Also at the memorable supper at Koppenbrügge, when the Tsar was entertained by the two Electresses of Hanover and Brandenburg, one of them expressed the wish that Peter might drive the Tartars out of Constantinople. A similar pious prayer, we may remember, was uttered by the Jesuit Wolf at Vienna, and the great Leibnitz composed a Latin distich to the following effect :—

“ May Saxon, Pole, the Emperor and the Tsar—
With Europe drive the Moslem forth and far.”

Whilst Peter was on his travels he was possessed with the idea of energetic action against Turkey. He was delighted at every success gained by the Allies. The news of the battle of Zenta filled him with enthusiasm. He wrote to the Patriarch Adrian that he intended to fight against the unbelievers till his last gasp. Peter's idea was to make Azof the basis of operations against Turkey. For this purpose it was necessary to have a powerful fleet. It was constructed, as we have shown above, by associations of individuals, taxed to supply ships according to the amount of their property, an arrangement corresponding to the naucraries of the Greeks. Peter thought himself at liberty to be absent whilst these preparations were going on. He hoped to have a fleet of ninety ships of war and large galleys, and about two hundred smaller vessels. He also desired to make a canal between the Volga and the Don, and employed thirty-five thousand workmen for this purpose, under the orders of a foreigner, Breckell. These

designs were, as might have been expected, not carried out. Some acute observers, especially the Venetian Ambassador, doubted whether the Sultan would prove so easy a prey as the Russians imagined, and said that if the Russians could make themselves masters of the Black Sea, it was as much as they could expect to do.

Peter's ambition received what was perhaps an unexpected support from Sweden. Charles XI., hearing that the Tsar had ordered the founding of six hundred iron cannon in Sweden, by means of the Swedish ambassador Knipercrona, made him a present of three hundred. Perhaps he was not sorry that Peter should be engaged in the South rather than in the North. But he had less success in engaging the assistance of England and Holland, the two Sea Powers, as they were then called.

The policy of these two countries was directed by William III., and his leading principle was the abasement of the power of Louis XIV. For this purpose he was extremely anxious to prevent everything which might distract the attention of Europe and turn it into other channels. To this end he now did his best to bring about a peace between the Emperor and the Sultan, as on a later occasion he actually sent a fleet into the Baltic in order to prevent a war between the Kings of Sweden and Denmark. He did not object to Russia fighting single-handed against the Turk, but he was reluctant that any other Power should give help. Peter was aware that he could not accomplish his object without the help of the Emperor. He energetically opposed the scheme of making peace on the basis of "*uti possidetis*"—that is, of each party keeping their conquests. He himself was especially in need of Kertch, first as a fortress in the Crimea, and next as a protection against Tartar invasions. Leopold acknowledged the importance of the place to Peter's interests, but

advised that it should be acquired by diplomacy rather than by force.

The plans of Peter against Turkey were naturally regarded with pleasure by the vassal states of the Porte, who were groaning under the Moslem yoke. Whilst Peter was in Holland he received a message from the Hospodar of Wallachia, saying that the subject populations in that province were more inclined to look to Russia as their liberator than to Austria. Similar assurances came from the Hospodar of Moldavia. Stress was laid on the importance of acquiring Otchakóf, a town to which the Turks had retired after being driven from Azof. Azof would serve as a basis of operations against Kertch, Otchakóf against other parts of the Crimea and the Danubian provinces. Otchakóf afterwards played an important part in the relations between England and Russia, in the time of the younger Pitt.

In the meantime negotiations for peace were in progress. The Congress of Carlowitz met in October 1698, with England and Holland as mediators, and peace was concluded in January 1699. Russia found itself left out in the cold. It is not the first time that the destruction of the Turkish Empire has been postponed to other considerations of international policy. By the treaty signed at Carlowitz, Austria recovered Transylvania, the Banat, and Hungary north-west of the Theiss; Venice kept Dalmatia and the Morea. Poland received Kamenetz and Podolia, while all tributes paid by these Powers to the Porte were done away with. It was a serious blow to Turkey, and indeed the beginning of the end; but with a little more energy the end itself might have been reached, to the great advantage of mankind.

Voznitsyn, Peter's envoy, appeared at Carlowitz, but was not able to effect anything. He at first treated the Turks with roughness and contempt, and would not demean himself by asking England and

Holland to act as mediators between Russia and the Porte. He could not persuade Austria to ask for Kertch. When this proved impossible he approached the Turks themselves. He told them, through their agent Mavrocordato, that it was contrary to their interests to make an immediate peace with Austria, that a war about the Spanish Succession was certain to break out, and that they could then hope to gain more favourable terms. Voznitsyn, in reporting these matters to the Tsar, advised him strongly to continue his armaments, and assured him that if a Russian army should only appear on the Danube, thousands and thousands of Slavs, of the same language and the same religion, would rise in rebellion. At length Voznitsyn signed a truce with the Porte for two years, two days before the signature of the Peace of Carlowitz.

In the autumn of 1698, after the execution of the Streltsi, Peter went to Vorónezh and found matters in a better state of preparation than he had expected. He wrote to Vinius to express his pleasure, but said that he felt like a man who plants dates and will never eat their fruit. He put into use the knowledge which he had acquired in his travels, by building a new ship to be called the *Predestination*. It was to be of large size, and only workmen from Amsterdam and Deptford were to be employed on it. It was intended to be the Tsar's "masterpiece," as the Germans say, his diploma work, to show to the world that he was now an accomplished ship-builder. It was to contain all the latest improvements. Peter found that the ships provided by the Associations were more conspicuous for quantity than quality, and that they needed a good deal of bettering. However, he was, generally speaking, in good spirits, and wrote to Vinius: "We are waiting for the cheerful morning, that the darkness of our doubt may disappear."

Voznitsyn, from Carlowitz, kept him well informed

about the affairs of the East. He said that the Porte desired peace rather than war. The Turks were not at all likely to begin the attack ; they would undertake nothing for the sake of Azof. They were quite unfit to conduct an offensive campaign. Voznítsyn advised his master to send an Ambassador to Constantinople who should, by his personal character and the splendour of his equipment, produce an effect upon the Turks. Peter took this advice and despatched Emelian Ukraíntsef, a diplomat of great experience, and brother-in-law of Viníus. Peter determined that he should proceed to Constantinople in a ship of war, and anchor under the walls of the Seraglio, at the very mouths of the Turkish cannon. Peter was to escort him for a considerable distance along the Black Sea. The world would thus be made aware that Russia possessed a fleet, and had no reluctance to entrust it to stormy waters. Up to this time, although the Turkish ministers were acquainted with the fact that many ships were building, they had a firm belief that they could not attempt to enter the Black Sea without being lost on the sand-banks at the mouth of the Don.

In the spring of 1699 a fleet was ready at Vorónezh, consisting of eighty-six vessels, of which eighteen were ships of war. Lefort was now dead, so the command was taken by Golovín. Peter hoisted his flag on the *Apostle Peter*, and was really the director of the expedition, as all orders were written by his own hand. The fleet weighed anchor on April 27th, and reached Azof on May 16th. Here, as at Taganróg, the Tsar inspected the new fortifications, and expressed his approval. In the middle of June the whole fleet had made its way into the Sea of Azof, having passed over the difficult sand-banks at the mouth of the Don without loss. Peter celebrated this victory over nature by salvoes of artillery. It took another month to get the fleet absolutely ready

for service. All day Peter was hard at work with ship-builders' tools, instructing and helping the workmen. The hours of the night were spent in drawing up instructions for Ukráintsef. The most important points were the cession of Azof, and the liberation of the Russians from any tribute due to the Tartars, an obligation which still existed as a monument of previous subjection.

At Taganróg a sham fight was held of great splendour. When the fleet arrived at Kertch, the Turkish Admiral refused to allow the ship on which the Ambassador was carried to pass the straits into the Black Sea. The ship was called the *Fortress*, and was commanded by a Dutch captain, Peter Van Pamburg. Golovín declared that unless permission were given the whole squadron would convoy the Ambassador to Constantinople. Negotiations lasted for ten days. Vice-Admiral Cruys, to whose diary we owe our minute knowledge of these events, paid a visit to Hassan Pasha in Kertch. He expressed himself much surprised to find that Englishmen and Dutchmen, whom he had hitherto regarded as the friends of Turkey, should have taken service with the Tsar of Muscovy. The Turks represented the exceedingly dangerous character of the Black Sea: "You do not know our sea. Not without reason is it called Black. In time of danger men's hearts grow black upon it."

Cruys replied that there were many experienced seamen in the Tsar's fleet, who were not now crossing the sea for the first time, and that the Russians would more easily find the way from Kertch to Constantinople, than the Turks from Constantinople to Kertch. Peter seized the opportunity of this delay to sound the channel of the Straits of Kertch, and to take careful note of the fortifications. Before matters were concluded, Golovín also paid a visit to Hassan Pasha; and in his suite was Peter, officiating as the quartermaster of the Admiral's gig, in the dress

of a Zaandam ship's-carpenter. When everything seemed to have been arranged, Peter returned to Azof, and at the end of September was back again in Moscow.

Even now the Turks did all they could to prevent Ukráintsef's departure. They represented that the wind was unfavourable, and that he would be sailing to certain death. They warned him of concealed reefs in the channel, which Pamburg showed by soundings to have no existence. At last the Turks gave in, on the understanding that a small Turkish squadron should accompany the vessel. Once in the open sea, Pamburg spread his sails and soon outstripped the Turks. He mistook the proper course to the Bosphorus and found himself on the coast of Asia Minor, near Heraclea. Setting forth again, he reached the Bosphorus on September 2nd, and was soon afterwards anchored in the waters of Constantinople.

Nothing could exceed the consternation of the Turks at the sight of a Russian ship anchored off the Seraglio. All conceivable questions were asked with respect to the size and strength of the fleet of which it was a part. The Dutch embassy was informed that the Turks were not pleased at the services which their countrymen had done to their natural enemies. Still, the Sultan himself condescended to appear on board the ship, and convinced himself of its sea-worthiness. To curiosity succeeded fear. A report was spread that the Russian fleet was arriving in the Black Sea, and was threatening Trebizond and Sinope. On September 23rd Pamburg gave a magnificent feast on board his vessel to his French and Dutch friends, and at midnight fired a salute from all his guns. This caused great alarm, and it was believed to be a signal for the Russian fleet, which was waiting in the neighbourhood, to attack the Turkish capital. The Sultan called on Ukráintsef to punish Pamburg, but the Ambassador absolutely refused. The Sultan then sent

three hundred soldiers to arrest Pamburg; but he declared that if they ventured on board he would blow them all into the air.

Pamburg entered into friendly relations with the Dutch and French Ambassadors, but the English Ambassador refused to receive him. On October 19th Ukráintsef held a solemn audience of the Sultan. The negotiations for peace began in November, and lasted eight months. The delays were endless. Ukráintsef believed, whether with good ground or not, that the other Powers were intriguing against him, especially the chief maritime Powers, England, Holland, and Venice. The Porte was at last persuaded to surrender Azof, and to allow some new fortifications to be erected in its neighbourhood.

Peter followed the negotiations with the deepest interest. By this time he had come to desire peace with the Porte, in order to undertake a war against Sweden. At the same time, he was not in a mood to make concessions. On one occasion, on receiving a despatch from Ukráintsef, he tore it in two, and said that he was prepared for immediate war. At last he sent instructions to Constantinople, urging the necessity of peace, and authorising some concessions. It was impossible to obtain any permission from the Porte with regard to the navigation of the Black Sea. When Ukráintsef pressed this point the Turks answered,—

“The Black Sea and all its coasts are ruled by the Sultan alone. They have never been in the possession of any other Power, and since the Turks have gained sovereignty over this sea, from time immemorial, no foreign ship has ever sailed its waters, nor ever will sail them. More than once, and even now, have the French, Dutch, English, and Venetians, begged the Porte to allow their trading ships on the Black Sea, but the Porte always refused them, and always will refuse them, because the

sovereignty of the Sea belongs to no one else than the Sultan. The Ottoman Porte guards the Black Sea like a pure and undefiled virgin, which no one dares to touch, and the Sultan will sooner permit outsiders to enter his harem, than consent to the sailing of foreign vessels on the Black Sea. This can only be done when the Turkish Empire shall have been turned upside down."

The treaty was at last signed on January 26th, 1699. It was, according to custom, not permanent but only for thirty years. It was agreed that Kasikerman and the other fortresses on the Dniéper should be razed, and the places given back to the Turks. Azof and the new fortresses erected in its neighbourhood were to remain with the Russians. The tribute paid by the Russians to the Tartars was to come to an end. A belt of waste and uninhabited country was to separate the whole of the Crimea from the Russian dominions. Besides this, Russian pilgrims were to be allowed to visit Jerusalem without being taxed, and Russian ecclesiastics living in Turkish dominions were to be protected from oppression and insult. Also the Resident of the Tsar in Constantinople was to be allowed the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by the representatives of other Christian Powers.

This peace put an end to the military and diplomatic struggles, which were connected with the Eastern Question, for many years. It may be thought that the result was much smaller than might at one time have been expected. But a definite end was reached. Russia had its foot firmly fixed on the Sea of Azof. She was secured from future attacks on the part of the Tartars. The path of future advance had been marked out. Peter's mind was now occupied with other matters. The Eastern Question was for the moment closed. The Baltic Question was to be opened.



PETER THE GREAT.

From his statue by Stephen Falconer at St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE NORTHERN WAR.

IT is not easy to understand what induced Peter to turn his arms so suddenly from the South to the North, from Turkey to Sweden. It may be said that at one time certain portions of the Baltic coast had belonged to the Muscovites; that the Tsar Iván IV. had attempted to make conquests on the coast of Finland and Livonia; that, during the reign of Theodore Ivanovitch, Boris Golítsyn had aimed at the possession of Narva; that Alexis had appeared with a large army under the walls of Riga. It may be alleged that the Russians had suffered much at the hands of the Swedes; that Swedish arms had wasted Russian territory; and that the Tsar Michael had to accept as a favour of Providence a treaty which excluded the Russians from the sea. Still, it is quite certain that when Peter undertook his foreign tour he had no such object in view. His treatment by Dalberg in Riga could not be seriously considered as a *casus belli*. Peter declined the suggestion of the Elector of Brandenburg, that he should join him in an offensive alliance against Sweden.

Lefort wrote in friendly terms to the Swedish minister, and there was talk of a fresh alliance between the two countries, to be concluded by his means. These offers were accepted by Sweden in a friendly spirit. The two embassies of Sweden and Russia stood at The Hague on a very amicable footing.

Peter accepted from Charles XI. the present of three hundred cannon. Blomberg certainly tells us that in 1697 Peter had expressed the intention of earnestly endeavouring to gain a town on the Baltic ; but at that time he had not secured his footing in the Black Sea. He is also reported to have said that he wished to break open a window into Europe ; but that did not necessarily imply a war with Sweden.

Something perhaps is due to the changed attitude of Poland with respect to Russia. Poland and Russia had been enemies during the whole of the seventeenth century. Their interests naturally clashed in Little Russia. The Polish government was not at all delighted at Peter's success over the Turks. It was said in 1696 that the Poles seriously thought of allying themselves with the Tartars against the Russians, and that the Hetman Mazeppa was playing a treacherous part. This long antagonism brought into greater prominence the change effected by the last election of a king. Peter had taken the greatest interest in the contest, and he was probably more pleased that a French candidate was rejected than that his own favourite gained the crown. Augustus met Peter half way, and from the beginning of his reign did his best to appease the deep-seated rivalry between Pole and Russ.

The strongest effect, however, was undoubtedly produced by the interview between the Tsar and the Elector which took place at Riga, and lasted from July 31st to August 3rd, 1698. We have an account of this from Peter's own hand. He tells us that Augustus definitely asked him to assist in case the Poles should act in a hostile manner towards their king, which it was very likely they would do. In return the Elector promised to help him to avenge the insult of Riga. Words alone passed, and nothing was written down. We know, however, that the personality of Augustus made a deep impression on the

Tsar. This never faded from his mind, and was the foundation of a strong affection.

We must, on the whole, ascribe the change of plan to a sudden impulse. We have seen that Peter was unable to obtain allies against Turkey. He was acute enough to perceive that the great European Powers were averse to any drastic settlement of the Eastern question at this moment. Peter therefore turned from the impossible to the possible. If he could not sail his ships in the Euxine he would sail them in the Baltic. When he formed this resolution he was probably not aware how far it would lead him.

No doubt in the genesis of the Northern war John Reinhold Patkul has a great deal to answer for. He was a Livonian patriot, who formed a plan for uniting all the neighbouring states in a coalition against Sweden. Livonia had first belonged to the Teutonic knights of whom Brandenburg was the legitimate successor. It had then passed to Poland as part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and had partly been conquered by Gustavus Adolphus, and confirmed to Sweden by the Treaty of Oliva.

It might be assumed, therefore, that both Brandenburg and Poland had wrongs to avenge. Patkul had grievances of his own. The Swedish kings, in their desire to limit the power of the Livonian nobility, had confiscated a large portion of their estates. Captain Patkul had been sent to Stockholm to plead their cause. He impressed the king by his eloquence, who said to him, "You have spoken like an honest man for your fatherland. I thank you." However, shortly afterwards he was arrested and condemned to death for high-treason. He contrived to escape, and spent several years in wandering over Europe, watching an opportunity for revenge. He probably wished to restore Livonia to independence, but he believed also that if his country were to be subject to Poland rather than to Sweden, the nobles,

whose cause he supported, would have a better chance of keeping their privileges. A special opportunity seemed to present itself by the accession of a boy to the throne of Sweden, who was not known at that time to be endowed with a genius and an energy scarcely inferior to that of Peter himself.

Patkul now approached Augustus and proposed to him a coalition of Poland, Brandenburg, Denmark and Russia, against Sweden. He laid memorials before the King of Poland which argued that Livonia had formerly belonged to Poland, that Brandenburg had a natural claim to Swedish territory, that Denmark was the avowed enemy of Sweden, and that at this moment the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, who laid claim to the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, in opposition to the King of Denmark, was actually the brother-in-law of Charles XII., and was therefore sure to receive his support. Russia he thought might be tempted, partly by the enterprising and adventurous character of its sovereign, and partly by the hope of recovering Ingria and Carelia. These memorials were laid before King Augustus in the latter half of 1698 and the first half of 1699. The result was that Augustus sent General Carlowitz, who was previously known to Peter, to Moscow, and that he entered into a secret agreement with the Livonian nobles that they should recognise the sovereignty of him and his successors.

Carlowitz found a Swedish embassy already in Moscow. It had arrived in the autumn of 1699, with the object of confirming the Treaty of Cardis which was itself a confirmation of the peace of Stólbovo. This, it will be remembered, had excluded Russia from the sea-board of the Baltic. It had been despatched, in the ordinary course of things, on the accession of the new king. The Tsar replied by sending an envoy to Stockholm, but the negotiations never lost their official character, or assumed the nature of private

intimacy. They desired that the Tsar should take an oath upon the gospels that he would observe the Treaty of Cardis. Peter succeeded in eluding this request, and the Ambassadors went away with a letter from Peter to Charles XII., containing a solemn ratification of the treaties. Nine days before, on November 11th, 1699, he had signed a treaty with Augustus, engaging himself to make war against Sweden. This treaty had been secretly negotiated at Preobrazhensk, and only a few people were privy to it. It was not to take effect until after the conclusion of peace with Turkey, but, in any case, not later than April 1700.

There can be no doubt that in these matters Peter was guilty of great duplicity. As early as March 1700 reports were current that the Tsar, although he had confirmed the treaties with Sweden, intended to attack both Reval and Narva. Two months later, Van der Hulst, the Dutch envoy, writes that something is in the wind, but that only Golovín, Menshikóf and one other were in the secret. In August Golovín told Van der Hulst that he did not believe that Peter was contemplating a breach with Sweden, and that in any case he would do nothing without an open declaration of war.

It was of course most important to deceive the Swedish Resident. Knipercrona writes to Charles XII., on May 16th, 1700, that Peter had paid him a visit on his return from Vorónezh, and reported that he had found his daughter there in great distress because she had heard that the Tsar intended to make war against her country. "Your daughter," he said, "burst out into such a flood of tears that I had great difficulty in comforting her. 'You stupid child,' I said, 'how can you believe that I can begin an unjust war and break an everlasting peace?'"

Thereupon Peter was deeply moved, embraced Knipercrona, and assured him that, if the King of

Poland were to conquer Riga, he would not suffer it to remain in his hands. It can scarcely be supposed that he would. Notwithstanding this, when Peter received, on August 8th, the news that peace with the Porte was signed at Constantinople, he wrote to King Augustus on the following day that he would at once declare war, would immediately march into Swedish territory, and make himself master of some Swedish fortresses.

A more unfortunate time for action could not have been found. Charles had just succeeded in repelling the attack of the conspirators who first entered the lists against him, and was ready to meet Peter with the confidence inspired by success. The King of Denmark had begun the war by invading Holstein and laying siege to Tönning. The siege proved a failure, but Charles XII., who was devotedly attached to his brother-in-law, replied by crossing the Sound and encamping in the close neighbourhood of Copenhagen. If the war had continued, the Danes would probably have suffered a severe defeat. But by the influence of William III, an Anglo-Dutch squadron was sent into the Sound, England and Holland being guarantors of the treaty which secured the Elbe Duchies to the house of Holstein-Gottorp.

By the efforts of Sir George Rooke the war was prevented from spreading any further and the peace of Travendal between Denmark and Sweden was signed on August ^{8th}/_{18th}. The object of William III. was to prevent, so far as he could, the rise of any European complication which might interfere with his great design for the humiliation of France. At the same time a force of Poles and Saxons marched against Riga, and in July Augustus directed the attack himself. He sent urgent messages to Peter to send him assistance, and especially to make a diversion in Ingria ; but the Tsar replied that he could do nothing until peace was concluded with the Turks. This enter-

prise was a complete failure, and in November King Augustus was compelled ignominiously to retire.

It has been seen that the peace of Travendal was signed on the very day on which Peter received the news of the conclusion of peace at Constantinople. There is little doubt that if he had been aware of its existence he would not have made war against Sweden. But news travelled slowly in those days. A month later Golovín, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that he knew nothing about such a treaty, and hoped that it did not exist. Definite confirmation of it did not arrive till a few days later, from Hamburg. At the same time diplomacy was not idle. Prince Hilkof was sent to Stockholm in June 1700 to assure the Swedes of Peter's attachment to peace, and Prince Trubétskoi was despatched, at the same time, to Berlin, to inform the Elector of Peter's intention of attacking Sweden immediately, and to ask for assistance, with the promise of recognising the Elector as King.

Peter's troops were now on the march. Hilkof had been ordered to inspect the fortress of Narva on the road to Stockholm, and had reported to the Tsar that it was only garrisoned by three hundred men, all old and weak. On the very same day that the Russian troops began their march, Hilkof was received in audience by Charles XII. in his camp at Tibberup, on Danish soil. He was received with affability and friendship. Hilkof, who had crossed over from Lands-crona to see the King, now returned to Stockholm, and was very properly put into prison on September 20th. In the meantime Peter had written to Hilkof on August 21st, ordering him to make a formal declaration of war, alleging as reasons the many breaches of faith of which Sweden had been guilty, and the insults to which Peter had been subjected in Riga in 1697—the last reason being, as Peter well knew, absolutely groundless and absurd.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NARVA.

SEVERAL months before the outbreak of the war Peter had planned the conquest of Narva and of Oréshek, now called Schlüsselburg, the latter of which had previously belonged to Russia. On March 2nd, 1700, he wrote to Golovín to send a young engineer Kortchmín, to Narva, to buy some cannon which he heard were for sale, and at the same time to pay particular attention to the defences and fortifications of the town. Kortchmín was also, if possible, to penetrate as far as Oréshek, "and if that be impossible, at least alongside of it. That position is very necessary. It is the outlet from Lake Ládoga to the sea—look at the map—and very necessary to keep back the reinforcements. The boy, I think, is not stupid, and can keep a secret. It is very necessary that Knipercrona, who knows that he has been well taught, should not find out about it."

Narva, which had been built by the Danes in the thirteenth century, lay on the right bank of the river Naróva, eight miles from its mouth. It was a place of considerable commerce, ruling the trade which came from Nóvgorod and Pskof. It was surrounded by a strong wall of six bastions on the land side, and of three bastions on the river side. The fortress was well armed, but the garrison, under the command of Rudolf Horn was small, consisting of thirteen hundred infantry, two hundred cavalry, and about four hundred

armed citizens. Peter's allies were extremely unwilling that he should attack Narva. Patkul, who had accompanied Carlowitz in his mission to Moscow, writes to the Saxon diplomatist Langen that he had done everything to dissuade the Tsar from this enterprise; that under no circumstances should he be allowed to penetrate into the heart of Livonia. Narva once conquered, he could attack Reval, Dorpat, and Pernau, before anything was heard of it at Warsaw; then he might occupy Riga, and subdue the whole of Livonia. It was necessary to be on one's guard against a Prince of such strength and energy; at the same time he must not be irritated by opposition: the best plan would be to offer him conquests in Ingria and Carelia.

Patkul had instructed Peter, "out of history and geography," that he had no claim upon Narva, as if he was likely to be influenced by these considerations. Langen replied that he had also done his best to dissuade Peter from attacking Narva, but that he was so set upon it that nothing could be done. "We must hope," he said, "that the town will eventually become the property of King Augustus."

Peter accompanied the army, in the position of a captain. On the march, in the town of Tver he received the news that Charles XII. was expected to land in Pernau, and would make his appearance in Livonia with an army of eighteen thousand men. The Tsar wrote to Golovin that he doubted the truth of this report, but that if it were really so, he must infer that the Danes had been conquered. However, the only thing was to go on and to do what God permitted. It was a great misfortune for Peter that he no longer could count on the assistance of Gordon and Lefort. Their place was imperfectly supplied by Duke Charles Eugène de Croy, who had entered the Russian service in 1698.

The Russian army reached Narva in September.

They laid siege to the town under the command of Croy and a Saxon engineer Hallart, who had been sent by King Augustus. It was soon seen that the Russian forces were insufficient for their purpose. They were deficient in munitions of war. In consequence of the bad roads, and the want of carriages, it had not been possible to concentrate more than from thirty-five to forty thousand men at Narva, while that town was defended by twelve hundred infantry, two hundred cavalry, and four hundred armed citizens. Peter excited the admiration of every one by his extraordinary and many-sided activity. The bombardment began on October 20th. Peter expected that the garrison would surrender without much resistance ; they, as he told Hallart, would be helping King Augustus to conquer Riga.

This expectation was far from being fulfilled. News arrived that the King had retired from Riga. After a fortnight's bombardment it was found that the Russian cannon and powder were not up to the mark. Hummert, an Esthonian by birth, deserted to the enemy, and thus caused great consternation in the Russian army. He did not, however, gain much by his motion, because while Peter hung him in effigy, under the windows of his own house at Moscow, the Swedes hung him in reality. Sheremétief marched out to intercept the Swedes, who were coming to relieve the town, but he retreated without having gained any substantial advantage. The winter was coming on, and the Russian troops were attacked by sickness. Meanwhile, Charles XII. was approaching, and just at this critical moment Peter left the army.

It is difficult to explain this extraordinary step. Of course it was attributed by the Swedes to cowardice ; but that feeling had no place in Peter's nature. It is more reasonable to suppose that he was conscious of his being no soldier, and entirely useless in a battle, whereas he might have a considerable effect in

hurrying up supplies from Pskof and Nóvgorod. It was also probable that he thought the siege would be still going on when he returned. Hallart informs us, as an eye-witness, that at 3 a.m. on November 18th, Peter came to the Duke of Croy in great consternation, and, after drinking a glass of brandy, begged him to take the command; and that he left him some instructions which were of no use whatever. Peter's own account of this transaction gives as his reason the desire to hasten the march of certain reinforcements on Narva, and the wish to have an interview with King Augustus. The instructions to Croy, which are extant, do not justify Hallart's strictures. It is reported that Peter said two years afterwards that he should have avoided the defeat of Narva if he had entrusted Croy with the command a fortnight earlier. It is quite possible that he now saw the danger of a double command, which had been so fatal at Azof, and there is no doubt that he took Golovín with him to Nóvgorod, leaving Croy by himself.

Charles XII., who had shown extraordinary energy in pushing on into Livonia, just after he had defeated the Danes on their own soil, now had the courage to attack with eight thousand men an army at least three times as numerous. The battle began at midday on November 20th, 1700, and before evening the Swedes had gained a complete victory. Charles exposed his person with reckless daring. The Swedes were massed in a tolerably compact body, whereas the Russian line was thin and extended. The Swedes were also assisted by a heavy snowstorm, which drifted right into the faces of the Russians, and prevented them from seeing twenty yards before them. Among the Russians there was little or no discipline, and they hated and despised their officers. The Russian commanders showed but little courage, and were too ready to give up everything for lost. Hallart said that Peter's generals had no

more heart in their breasts than a frog has hair on its belly.

Pleyer speaks of the Russian soldiers as sheep without a shepherd. Sheremétief was one of the first to run. He led his cavalry to the River Naróva, and succeeded in getting across; but many of his men were lost in the rapids. The bulk of the army retreated by the Kamperholm bridge, which broke down under them, and many were lost. Peter's two original regiments, the Preobrazhénsky and the Seménofsky, held their ground. The foreigners, being afraid of their own soldiers, went over to the Swedes, and were well received by Charles. The Russian generals then surrendered, and were allowed to retreat with standards and arms, but with only six guns. Yet a Swede who was present wrote at the time, "If he had had the courage to attack us he would have infallibly beaten us, for we were extremely tired, having scarcely eaten or slept for several days; and besides this, all our men were drunk with the brandy that they had found in the Muscovite tents, so that it was impossible for the few officers that remained to keep them in order." The Russians lost about five thousand seven hundred men. Seventy-nine officers, including nine guards, were taken prisoners. The Swedes also captured a hundred and forty-nine cannon and twenty-three mortars, many of the guns being those which had been given to Peter by Charles XI. before the war, and a hundred and forty-six standards. The Swedes lost, in killed and wounded, less than two thousand men.

Peter's own account of what happened is as follows: "Our army was defeated by the Swedes, that is incontestable. But it must be remembered that the regiment of Lefort was the only seasoned one. The two regiments of Guards had only been present at the two attacks on Azof, they had never assisted in a pitched battle, especially against regular troops. The other regiments consisted, with the exception of some

colonels, of newly recruited troops, both officers and men. Then we must take into account the great want of food, arising from the fact that the roads were so muddy in the autumn of the year that the supply of provisions entirely ceased. In one word, it was like a children's game. One cannot be surprised that these inexperienced novices came off badly when opposed to so old, well-trained, and well-found an army. The defeat was indeed sad and painful to us. It seemed to deprive us of all hope for the future, and to spring from a double portion of Divine wrath. But now, thinking it over carefully, we must ascribe it rather to the goodness of God than to His anger. For if we had conquered here, when we knew so little about war or about affairs of State, this piece of good fortune might have had the most disastrous consequences. This fate, indeed, did befall the Swedes, who were well known in Europe as well instructed, practised, and experienced men of war, and the French called them the scourge of Germany. Just as we were depressed by the defeat of Narva, so were they by the defeat of Poltáva, where they saw their great designs completely annihilated. But we, when we had experienced this ill fortune, or rather this good fortune, were made by necessity energetic, laborious, and experienced, as the sequel of this history will show."

It was easier for Peter to assume a philosophical attitude after the victory of Poltáva than it was immediately after the catastrophe of Narva. He did his best, not only to conceal the truth, but even to tell lies about it. He ordered Matvéief, the Russian Ambassador at Holland to spread the report that the Swedes were in the greatest difficulties during the battle; that they thrice begged for a truce, and when it was granted fell treacherously upon the Russians. There can be no doubt that what had happened was a severe blow to Russian prestige. From Vienna

Golitsyn reported that the Russians were despised and laughed at. Kannitz would not speak to him. Even Peter's beloved Dutch broke out into joy over the victory of Sweden, and accused the Tsar of cowardice. Poland began to agitate for the restoration of Kíef. A report was current in Vienna that Peter had suffered a second defeat at Pskof, that he had escaped with a small number of followers, and that Sophia had been liberated from her convent and placed on the throne.

As Peter was derided so was Charles deified. The boy-king—for he was only just eighteen—had triumphed over all his foes. Medals were struck to give permanence to both sentiments. Some of them represented Charles riding over his enemies, victorious over three antagonists at once. On another Peter was seen standing by a furnace for the heating of shot with the legend, "But Peter stood with them and warmed himself," and on the reverse a crowd of flying Russians, Peter at their head with his sword thrown away and his head uncovered, holding a handkerchief to his eyes with the legend, "And Peter went out and wept bitterly."

Peter was never greater than after a defeat. Just as at Azof, he now redoubled his efforts to secure success. The news reached him when he was only a little distance from Narva. He met Prince Nikíta Répnin, who was marching towards Narva after having collected his division in the country of the Volga. He at once sent him back to Nóvgorod, with orders to re-form the regiments which were retreating from the field of battle in confusion. He set to work to repair the fortifications of Nóvgorod and Pskof. He even laboured with his own hands at the first entrenchments. He felt that the Swedes might at any time invade the country. After spending a fortnight at Nóvgorod, in this necessary work, he returned to Moscow.

Charles conducted himself with less wisdom. It seemed even as if his boyish head was a little turned by success. He is reported to have said to Sparre, "There is no pleasure in fighting with the Russians, for they will not stand like other men, but run away at once. If the Naróva had been frozen, we should hardly have killed one of them. The best joke was when the Russians got upon the bridge and it broke down under them. It was just like Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Everywhere you could see men's and horses' heads and legs sticking up out of the water, and our soldiers shot at them like wild ducks."

He at first determined to pursue the Russians into their own country, and if possible to march to Moscow. But on second thoughts he resolved to turn his arms against King Augustus. He was naturally reluctant to leave him in his rear, while he was engaged in a difficult winter expedition in a desolate country. His generals, also, had no mind to undergo such privations without necessity. Charles, therefore, contented himself with sending only a small force to Lake Ládoga and the Neva and took up his own winter quarters in the Castle of Lais, close to Dorpat. Here he amused himself with suppers, masquerades, and spectacles, and even a great sham fight with snow castles and snow-balls. But all this time he was busying himself with plans of war. Nine years were to elapse before the defeat of Narva was avenged.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE WASTING OF LIVONIA.

THE great object of the policy of Peter the Great, and the great end which he achieved, was to make Russia a member of the European family of nations. This was accomplished by conflict ; and the struggles in which his life was spent took two directions, the one internal and the other external. Some historians have treated these two departments separately, but we propose, as far as possible, to deal with them together. At the same time, our attention must now be directed to the successes which followed the disaster of Narva ; and it will be useful, as an introduction, to take a general survey of Peter's policy towards the nations which surrounded him.

When the Romanófs first ascended the throne of Muscovy, they were forced to adopt a defensive attitude towards their powerful neighbours, especially Sweden and Poland. Not until the middle of the seventeenth century did they assume the aggressive. But the first attack upon Sweden failed. Livonia was not conquered, and no point of vantage was gained upon the Baltic. The wrestle with Poland was more successful ; and the conquest of Little Russia with Kíef was a solid advantage to the growing state. Next ensued a struggle with Turkey ; but the first attempts to subdue the Crimea were failures. The enterprise was taken up again by Peter, in the first flush of his exuberant youth. We know the sacrifices he made, and the

labours he underwent. But Azof was conquered, and a Russian fleet made its appearance in the sea of that name. The Porte now knew that it had to deal with an antagonist of different metal, and with an adversary who would not lightly abandon a task which he had set himself to perform.

It was fortunate for the young Tsar that he found his chief rivals in a condition of weakness. Sweden was no longer, as in the days of Gustavus Adolphus, mistress of the North. Livonia was no longer a willing subject, and the rebellious diplomacy of Patkul was only a prelude to those internal dissensions which would have reduced Sweden to the condition of Poland if the process of disintegration had not been arrested by the genius of Gustavus III. The state of Poland was still worse. Its constitution, as a nominal republic under an elected monarch, was merely a screen for the rivalries of powerful nations who were preparing to eat it up, and a large share of the spoil was certain to fall to the lot of Russia. The Porte had reached its highest point of energy in the siege of Vienna in 1683, and the loss of Azof was but a step in the downward path of ruin. We hear much of the partitions of Poland, but the partitions of Sweden and of Turkey belong to the same category of facts. Nor was the growing influence of Russia observable in war alone. The diplomatic representatives of Muscovy at Stockholm, Warsaw, and Constantinople, were able to exhibit a bold front to the ambassadors of other Powers. What a change from the first half of the century, when it seemed as if Muscovy herself would be the subject of a partition!

Although Peter was pursuing the traditional policy of his house and country, still the vigour of his progress was due to his personal qualities; and nowhere can we see more clearly the coincidence of the two factors by which the course of history is determined—the inevitable operation of secular forces,

and the impulse given to events by the commanding personality of an individual. Great men are the creatures of their age, but they are also the creators of another. None but such as he could have conquered the inmost recesses of the Gulf of Finland, and have established the Russian flag on its northern and southern coasts ; none but he could have reduced to subservience the ruler of Poland and Saxony, Augustus, more physically than morally strong.

Still, even Peter could not deal successfully with all these questions at once. He had to make a choice. The foundation of St. Petersburg was paid for by disasters upon the Pruth, and the loss of Azof. Some compensation was found in the attacks upon Central Asia and Persia, which have ever since remained a principal object of Russian ambition. Undoubtedly Peter owed his first prominence in Europe to the fact that he was regarded as the principal European bulwark against the Turks, and as the leader of the vanguard of the Cross against the dangerous barbarism of the Crescent. It may be questioned whether it would not have been better to have sustained this part with more tenacity, and to have sought an outlook into Europe rather through the Black Sea and the Mediterranean than through the Baltic and the North Sea. Fate, and perhaps accident, determined that he should act otherwise. Once involved in the struggle with a young monarch, as energetic and as gifted as himself, it was not until after the crowning victory of Poltava that he could resume the execution of his other objects. Then followed the disaster of the Pruth in 1711, when the safety of the Russian army and of the Tsar himself could only be bought by gold. Peter spent his remaining years in consolidating the position of Russia as a Northern Power. Petersburg took the place of Moscow, the Tsar of Muscovy became the Emperor of all the Russias, and the activity of Russia towards

the East was set on foot. Peter left no testament to his successors ; nor did he need to leave any beyond his example. Many generations must pass, and many scions of the house of Romanóff be crowned in the Kremlin, before Russia can carry out what her great hero imagined and began, and would have executed if the execution had been possible within the limits of a single life.

It might have seemed, after the battle of Narva, that everything lay open to Charles XII., and the dream of Leibnitz might be fulfilled that Sweden should reign in Moscow and on the Amou. We can, however, scarcely be astonished if a boy of eighteen, however gifted, failed to fulfil this destiny. It is not certain what were the plans of Charles after his victory. Some say that he was advised to make peace with Augustus, and to turn his arms against Peter, but that he was prevented by his personal antipathy to the Elector, whom he despised. Others report that Charles had himself planned a campaign against Russia, but had been diverted by the advice of his generals, who wished him first to finish with the King of Poland. It is also said that Peter was not ill-disposed to make peace with Charles, and that he had requested the intervention of the Elector of Brandenburg for this purpose.

One European potentate, at least, would have been glad to make large sacrifices to avert a Northern war. William III. had during the whole of his life looked forward to a final and decisive struggle against the preponderance of Louis XIV. Long before Louis had accepted the heritage of Spain, William had foreseen that to obtain his ends he must be in a position to unite all Europe against the common foe. A conflict in the North, arousing passions as intense as those which raged around the Spanish Empire, but with totally different objects in view, would prevent unanimity of action. William would lose some of

his strongest supporters in this enterprise of his life, which he pursued with the untiring passion of a personal *vendetta*. It was therefore his object to crush all seeds of disunion in the North which might interfere with the execution of his plans. With this object he had despatched Admiral Roke into the Baltic to save Charles from the attacks of Denmark ; and with this view he now offered to Peter the mediation of England and Holland, which Peter was not unwilling to accept.

But whatever may have been Peter's readiness for peace, he continued to prepare for war. The Danish ambassador in Moscow was not slow in adding fuel to the flame. Repnin was ordered to re-organise the troops which had been scattered at Narva. The fortifications of Pskof were strengthened, Peter himself lending a hand to the work. Vinius was directed to re-form the artillery, and Peter, in a constant correspondence, gave advice about every detail. A hundred cannon were cast at Olónetz, and a thousand twelve-pound shot for each gun, the metal being provided from church bells. Vinius could boast that he had delivered three hundred cannon, fully equipped, in a single year. To provide for these expenses, new taxes were imposed, and the property of monasteries confiscated. In December Sheremétief had orders to proceed, the frontier-fortresses of Pskof, Nóvgorod, Petchérsky and Isborsk having been provided with garrisons.

First, however, it was necessary to come to terms with Augustus. At the end of the year he had written to Peter, asking him to meet him at Düna-burg at the beginning of March. The Tsar set out at once, but on coming at the place of meeting found that the King was at Birze, eighty miles farther on. A sledge was at the door, ready to convey Augustus to Düna-burg. The negotiations lasted ten days. Peter suggested that the Poles should join the Russians

and Saxons, and tear Livonia from the Swedes. Sczuka, the Polish chancellor, replied that this alliance could only be secured by the surrender of some fortresses now occupied by Russia, such as Kief. This was of course impossible, and no terms were made with Poland. But a treaty was concluded with Augustus, as Elector, which bound both parties to continue the war with all their force, and not to make peace but with mutual consent. Peter was to assist Augustus with fifteen or twenty thousand well-armed infantry, to send a hundred thousand pounds of gunpowder to Vitebsk, to pay certain expenses, and to provide a subvention of a hundred thousand rubles in three years. Augustus was to attack the Swedes in Livonia and Esthonia, so as to allow Peter a free hand in Ingria and Karelia. Livonia and Esthonia were, if conquered, to belong to Poland, without any claim on the part of Russia. Twenty thousand more rubles were promised to bribe the Polish magnates to adopt the views of the alliance. It was not, however, without difficulty that Peter was able to raise the sums which he had engaged to pay.

Before the conclusion of this treaty, in December 1700, Sheremétief attacked Marienburg in Livonia, twenty miles from the Russian frontier. He was repulsed, and in revenge Schlippenbach, a Swedish colonel, invaded Russia and laid siege to the monastery of Petchérsky, but also without result. However, Charles attacked the Saxons in the Düna on July 20th, 1701, and defeated them. This success diverted Charles from his Russian foes, so that Sheremétief was again able to attack Schlippenbach. After some small successes, a decisive action took place at Erestfer on January 9th, 1702, in which the Swedes lost heavily. Peter was beside himself with joy. Sheremétief received the title of Field-Marshal, the order of St. Andrew, and the Tsar's likeness. Officers and soldiers were richly rewarded. There were great

festivities at Moscow, with *Te Deums*, the firing of cannon, and the ringing of bells. A banquet was given by Peter in a building erected in the Red Square, the palace having been burned down. This had happened on July 10th, in the previous year. A fire, which began on the other side of the river, crossed the stream and destroyed nearly all the buildings in the Kremlin, ministers' public offices, with all their archives, monasteries, houses, and stores of provisions and ammunition. The palace was destroyed, the prisoners escaping with difficulty. The bells of the Cathedral fell down, notably the great bell of the Iván tower, which weighed two hundred and twenty-eight thousand pounds, and was broken to pieces. Two thousand houses were destroyed, and the stone bridge over the Moskvá was only saved by the personal exertions of the Tsar.

About eighteen months later, on July 18th, 1702, Schlippenbach suffered a still more serious defeat at Hummelshof. The Swedes had only about five thousand men engaged, and of these at least two thousand five hundred were killed and wounded. They lost also all their artillery, standards, and drums. On the other hand, the loss of the Russians was only four hundred killed and about the same number wounded. The Swedish infantry almost ceased to exist, and Schlippenbach retreated to Pernau with the cavalry. After this battle Livonia lay defenceless before the invaders. The large garrisons in Riga, Pernau, and Dorpat, did not venture to leave the walls. Profiting by this, Peter gave orders to lay the country waste, orders which the General thoroughly carried out, destroying towns, villages, and farms, and sending the captives to the south of Russia as prisoners.

A despatch of Sheremétief's runs as follows : " I send Cossacks and Kalmuks to different estates for the confusion of the enemy. But what am I to do with the people I have captured? The prisons are full

of them, besides all those that the officers have. There is danger, because these people are so sullen and so angry." It is said that a Swedish boy or girl of fifteen could be bought at Pskof for twelve *groschen*, or a little more than a shilling. Perhaps the most important town taken was Marienburg, because in that was captured Catherine, who then formed part of the household of the Provost Gluck; she was destined some day to become Peter's wife and to mount the throne of Russia as Empress.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FOUNDATION OF ST. PETERSBURG.

WE must now turn our attention to the North. It was understood that the Swedes were likely to attack the port of Archangel, and Peter had given orders to have it strengthened in consequence. In the summer of 1701 the imminence of an expedition against Archangel under Charles XII. himself became known. Everything was done to secure the safety of this important town. Fortifications were erected, and munitions of war prepared. Peter determined to go himself to the spot, and set out in April 1702, taking with him Alexis, then a boy of twelve years of age. There was no serious attack on the part of the Swedes, but in a skirmish Peter succeeded in capturing a frigate and a yacht, with which success he was highly elated.

The war, which made the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland unsafe, naturally filled the roadstead of Archangel. There were thirty-five English and fifty-two Dutch ships in the port, with a convoy of three ships of war. It caused no small terror in Moscow to hear that a strong French fleet was expected at Archangel with an army-corps of twenty thousand men. The fortifications on the bank of the Dvina were strengthened, and the building of ships was vigorously pressed forward. On Trinity Sunday Peter launched two frigates, the *Holy Spirit* and the *Courier*, and laid

the keel of a third vessel. He also paid a second visit to the monastery of Solovétsk ; and it was here that he heard the news of the victory of Hummelshof.

Peter's presence being no longer necessary at Archangel, he marched rapidly to the banks of the Neva. He sailed through Lake Onéga and down the River Svir, and arrived at the end of September at the town of Old Ládoga, on the River Vólkhof, near Lake Ládoga. Here he met Sheremétief, who had sailed down the Vólkhof from Nóvgorod ; here also he found the artillery which Vinius had collected for him. Peter laid great stress on the conquest of Ingria, because through that country lay the water-way from the Gulf of Finland into the interior of Russia. These territories had been wrested from Russia by Gustavus Adolphus, and secured to Sweden by the treaty of Stólbovo in 1617.

The most important object of attack was the fortress of Noteburg. It had been built about four hundred years before, by the people of Nóvgorod, on an island in the River Neva, just at the point where it leaves Lake Ládoga. The island was called in Russian Oréshek, from its similarity in shape to a hazel nut ; and the Swedish name conveys the same idea. The garrison consisted of four hundred and fifty men, with a hundred and forty-two cannon, under the command of Schlippenbach, the brother of the general in Livonia. Peter advanced to the attack with an army of twelve thousand five hundred men, under the orders of Field-Marshal Sheremétief. With this difference of numbers, the event could not long be doubtful. After blockading the fort, the Russians opened fire on October 11th, and eleven days later the place was stormed. A capitulation was granted on honourable terms, and the garrison were allowed to depart to the next Swedish fort. Peter gave his new conquest the name of Schlüsselburg, or the key-fortress, as being the key to the River Neva. The capture of the island

was celebrated by an annual festival, which the Tsar always attended in person.

It must not be supposed that this advantage was won without sacrifice. The Russians lost more than the whole Swedish garrison—more than five hundred killed, besides nine hundred wounded. Peter gave the command of this new possession to Menshikóf, who now began to have an important influence over Peter's life. Peter wrote to Viníus: "The nut was hard, but it is happily cracked. Our artillery did its duty well." On December 15th Peter made a triumphal entry into the capital. Triumphal arches were erected in three places. As Peter went under one of them a crown of laurel was let down upon his head, a compliment which he specially enjoyed.

After a short sojourn in the capital, Peter departed for Vorónezh, in order to take charge of the mobilisation of the fleet. He was afraid that the Tartars, and possibly the Turks, might seize the opportunity of recovering their lost ground. On his way he founded a new city, which he called Oranienburg, intended as a present to Menshikóf. It is now named Ránenburg, and contains seven thousand inhabitants. Peter sent Menshikóf a sketch of the new town, which represents it as a pentagon, with five bastions named after the five senses. It has three gates, Moscow, Vorónezh, and Schlüsselburg. In the letter which accompanied the sketch, the Tsar says to his favourite, "We named the town with the blessing of the Metropolitan of Kíef with bulwarks and gates. At the blessing we drank—at the first bastion brandy, at the second sack, at the third Rhine wine, at the fourth beer, at the fifth mead, and at the gates Rhine wine."

Peter only stayed a month at Vorónezh, and then left for Schlüsselburg, scarcely stopping at Moscow. His design was to capture the Swedish fort of Nyenskanz, or new earth-works, situated on the right bank of the Neva, lower down than Schlüsselburg, at the

mouth of the river Okhta. We must imagine it to be a little place in a desert country, offering a shelter for ships, and deriving its prosperity from saw-mills. The new earth-works, from which the fort derived its name, had not been completed, and served the purposes of the besiegers. The bombardment began on May 11th, and on the following day the garrison capitulated. Peter called his new conquest Slotburg, and it became the nucleus of the city of St. Petersburg. In returning thanks to the Almighty for his victory, Peter dwelt with especial fervour on the fact that he had gained the seaport he had so long desired.

Immediately after this conquest a Swedish squadron appeared at the mouth of the Neva, not knowing that their fort had fallen into Russian hands. Their signal was returned, in order to lead them into a trap. Peter and Menshikóf went down the river in boats and attacked two Swedish vessels which had sailed up the river on May 18th. The ships were captured after their crews had been killed almost to a man. This was the first Russian naval victory. Its importance was of course greatly exaggerated, and the heroes of the day, Peter and his friend Menshikóf, were decorated with the order of St. Andrew. The object of Peter in acquiring these territories was not so much to recover a lost possession of Russia as to open up a road of commerce to Stockholm and other places. He sent news of his success to Holland and other maritime countries, promising a reward of several hundred ducats to the first skipper who should sail into his harbour. On May 27th, 1703, Peter began the building of St. Petersburg. His object was now attained, and the possession of this outlook into Europe was the most memorable result of the Northern war.

We borrow from Schuyler, who was so well acquainted both with the site and with its destinies, the story of the building of the capital. He tells us

that the River Neva, near its mouth, takes a sharp turn and divides into three or four branches, forming a number of islands, large and small. These islands, overgrown with forests and thickets, and liable to be covered with water during westerly winds, were inhabited by a few Finnish fishermen, who were accustomed to abandon their mud huts at the approach of a flood, and to seek refuge on the higher ground. On the first of these islands, called by the Finns, Yanni-Saari, or Hare Island, where the river is still broad and deep, Peter laid the foundations of a fortress and a city which he named St. Petersburg, after his patron saint. The fortress consisted of six bastions, first constructed of wood and, three years afterwards, of stone. At the same time a church was built in the fortress and dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. It contained a chime of bells tuned to play an air. This was replaced, in the year 1714, by the present cathedral, built by the Italian architect Tressini.

Just outside the fortress Peter built for himself a small hut, made of logs and roofed with shingles, which he called his palace. It was about fifty-five feet long by twenty wide, and contained three rooms, lighted by little windows set in leaden frames. It resembled the cottage in which he lived at Zaandam, and, like that, received an outer covering to preserve it. It is an object of pilgrimage to admirers of the Tsar. His bedroom is now a chapel, in which prayers are said before the miraculous picture which he carried through his campaigns, and had with him at the battle of Poltáva. For Menshikóf, who was made Governor of the city, a large house was constructed, in order that he might receive foreign envoys and give entertainments. Close to the bridge leading to the fortress was a tavern, called the Osteria, and afterwards the Triumphal Osteria of the Four Frigates, where wine, beer, tobacco, and cards, were sold.

About eighteen miles from the mouth of the Neva

lay an island, which was called Retu-Saari by the Finns, and Kotlin by the Russians. North of this island the water of the river was shallow ; but to protect it on the southern side the construction of a new fort was necessary. The foundations had to be laid in the salt water, but by December it was completed, and received the name of Kronslot. The island is now the site of the city and the fort of Cronstadt.

The first ship arrived in the Neva in 1703. Peter went to meet it at the bar, and piloted it into port. It contained a cargo of salt and wine, and had been freighted by Cornelius Calf of Zaandam, Peter's old friend. The skipper, Auke Wybes, received a reward of five hundred ducats, and each sailor thirty thalers. The ship was re-named *St. Petersburg*, and was exempted for ever from tolls and dues.

We must not suppose that Peter was allowed to enjoy his new acquisition in security. During the whole of the summer of 1703 a Swedish squadron guarded the mouth of the Neva. Peter was not strong enough to attack it, and could only remain on the defensive. The new capital was also threatened by land. General Kronhjort appeared on the banks of the Sestra in the immediate neighbourhood of the new town. In July 1703 the Russians were defeated here and were compelled to retire to Wyborg. To repel these attacks, the building of the dockyard on the River Svir was pushed on with vigour. Soon a number of the Russian fleet appeared at Kronslot, coming from Olónetz, where the seat of the Admiralty then was. Peter repelled a Swedish attack under Baron Maidel in the neighbourhood of the fort of Peter and Paul. Another attack on Kronslot in June 1704 proved a failure, as did a second attempt of Maidel to surprise Kotlin by marching over the ice.

The succeeding year witnessed a more serious enterprise. The Swedes prepared a fleet in Karlsrona,

Admiral Anckarstjerna advanced with twenty-two ships, supported by Maidel with several thousand land troops. The Russian fixed stakes in the channel between Kronslot and Kotlin, and the Swedes mistook them for the masts of ships. They kept at a respectful distance, and the bombardment was unsuccessful. After this failure the Swedes left the Neva alone for three years.

The Swedes did not look upon these events with indifference, but they did their best to minimise the probable results of Peter's action. Charles XII. said, "Let the Tsar tire himself out with founding new towns; we will keep for ourselves the honour of taking them later on." St. Petersburg was the apple of Peter's eye, his "paradise" as he frequently calls it. He would never surrender it, even for the most favourable offers of peace. Still, the idea of making it the capital of his empire apparently only came to him gradually. The Senate was removed to it from Moscow in 1714, but it was not till four years later that it became the seat of government. It is curious that in the first-named year an edict was issued forbidding any more stone houses to be built in Moscow, and shortly afterwards this prohibition was extended to the whole empire. After many changes of plan, Peter determined to build, on an island called the Vasíly Ostrof, a town laid out in the Dutch fashion, with canals through the streets. Here he compelled the nobles to construct palaces proportionate to the size of their estates. This island still remains the centre of commerce, and although the canals have been filled up, their course can still be traced.

There is little left now of the Petersburg of its founder's time, except a part of the University, and the palace of Menshikóf, which is now a school for cadets. Peter disliked large and lofty rooms. The apartments which he inhabited in the Winter Palace were furnished with double ceilings, so as to reduce

their height. His constructions had but little taste. The nobility naturally detested Petersburg. They had to live in new houses, built at an extravagant cost in a place where the living was dear and the climate unhealthy. The neighbouring country was neither fruitful nor safe. Little fruit could be grown, and no vegetables, excepting cabbages and turnips, and in 1714 two soldiers on guard were killed by wolves, and a woman was torn to pieces in the middle of the day in front of Menshikóv's palace. In order to economise fuel, no one was allowed to heat his bath-house more than once a week. Yet such was the effect of Peter's will that in 1714 the city contained thirty-four thousand five hundred buildings, and in 1718 forty thousand. It was popularly stated that two hundred thousand workmen lost their lives in building the city. This is probably an exaggeration ; but even now it is, as Schnyler tells us, one of the few cities in the world in which the death-rate exceeds the birth-rate, and where the population is maintained by immigration.

Thirty years ago there was much talk of the unsuitableness of Petersburg for a capital, and the desirability of removing the seat of government ; yet such a change seems now farther off than ever. But during that interval the centre of gravity of the Russian empire has moved farther and farther away from the artificial capital. Perhaps, if ever Constantinople should come into Russian hands, and if a Tsar should arise with something of Peter's determination, a new Russia might take its rise, with Moscow for its capital and the Bosphorus for its port, which would give Russian policy a fresh direction in Europe, and lead to economical and political changes which appear as yet indefinitely distant.

CHAPTER XXI.

DIPLOMACY. PATKUL.

FORTUNE smiled upon Peter in Livonia as well as in Ingria. In the spring of 1704 he ordered Sheremétief to undertake the siege of Dorpat, which was strongly fortified, and had a considerable garrison. Peter promised his assistance. Sheremétief hastened to the banks of the River Grubach, and a Swedish flotilla of thirteen ships fell into his hands. Peter made the most of this success at Moscow, but complained to Sheremétief that he was very slow. The General, on the other hand, threw the blame on the Tsar and Menshikóf for not coming to his assistance. The fact was that Sheremétief was quite unable to undertake a business of this kind.

At last Peter appeared in person. In a letter to Menshikóf he points out the mistakes which have been made, and shows that a large amount of ammunition has been wasted to no purpose. A new energy was now thrown into the operations. After a hard and costly struggle the town and fortress surrendered on July 24th, 1704. Peter wrote to his friends: "With the help of God we have recovered this famous possession of our country." Dorpat was undoubtedly a Russian town, and had been founded by the Russian Grand Duke Yarosláv in 1029, under the name of Yúrief. It had belonged to Russia at various times in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and now came finally into her possession.

In the meantime the siege of Narva had been resumed by Field-Marshal Ogilvy, whom Patkul had induced to enter the Russian service. Peter went there after the fall of Dorpat. The Russians adopted the device of dressing a number of their troops in Swedish uniforms, to make the besieged believe that Sclippenbach was hastening to their assistance. By this stratagem also he was enabled to make a number of Swedes prisoners. Ogilvy, on his arrival, changed the point of attack, and erected batteries on the eastern side of the Naróva. The bombardment began on Sunday, August 10th. The besiegers were ten times as numerous as their enemies. An enormous number of bombs were thrown into the town, breaches were made in the bastions, and Horn, the commandant of the place, was urged to surrender; but he stubbornly refused. On August 20th the place was carried by storm. Horn then offered to capitulate, when the time was past. The soldiers, in their fury, spared neither age nor sex. Two-thirds of the Swedish garrison were killed. After the slaughter had lasted for two hours, Peter tried to stop it, but in vain; although he killed a soldier, with his own hands, who refused to obey orders. When he had done this he penetrated into the council-chamber, where the governors of the town were assembled, and, throwing his sword on the table, said, "Do not be afraid. This is not Swedish, but Russian blood." Horn, after his wife had been killed in the assault, was taken prisoner, and kept a prisoner in Russia for fifteen years. His children were educated at the Tsar's expense.

The fortress of Ivángorod, which lies on the opposite bank of the Naróva, was starved into surrender a week later. Peter wrote to Ramodanófsky: "Where we had such grief four years ago, we are now joyous victors; for by the scaling ladder and the sword we have taken this famous fortress in three-quarters of an hour." Ramodanófsky replied: "The whole nation is

delighted, and the praise of this victory will resound, not only in Europe, but throughout the whole of Asia, causing terror and distress to all the followers of Islám."

We must not suppose that these successes of Peter were received with unanimous joy throughout the rest of Europe, or that Russia was, at first, cordially welcomed into the family by her more fortunate sisters. As early as the summer of 1702 Matvéief had reported from Holland that people were beginning to be afraid that if the Russians conquered Livonia, it might lead to the subjugation of Poland and Lithuania and cause danger to Prussia. Holland, indeed, had several reasons for feeling annoyance. She was not only jealous of the rise of a new maritime power, but, sharing the diplomatic policy of England, she did not desire that any complications should interfere with the great European crusade against France. We know that even before the outbreak of the war, pains were taken to separate Russia from the triple alliance against Charles XII. These feelings were strengthened by Peter's attack on Narva, by the building of vessels at Archangel, and by the acquisition of a port in the Gulf of Finland. It was said that if Russia possessed an entrance to the Baltic, she might, through this open door, go wherever she pleased, and would perhaps become as formidable as France herself. The Dutch had also large supplies of corn stored up in bond in the Livonian towns, and they were naturally afraid lest these should fall a prey to warlike operations. Witsen strongly urged that the Russians should not meddle with these stores. The defeat of the Russian arms at Narva was therefore a very grateful circumstance, and Matvéief had to undergo a good deal of sarcasm. The Swedes spread the report in Holland that Peter had lost his senses. The Dutch were, however, somewhat comforted by the consideration that the war would tend to develop their trade in small arms.

When William III. arrived in Holland matters were not much better, and if it had not been for the influence of Witsen, the Dutch would have had few friends. Marlborough was not more favourably disposed than William. It was, indeed, of the utmost importance to these statesmen that Charles XII. should not be driven to join the side of the French in the great struggle which was proceeding. Matvéief, with clumsy cunning, attempted to bribe the Dutch statesmen, but he was uncompromisingly repulsed. Like Louis XIV., he seems to have considered that Marlborough could be easily bribed ; but he does not appear to have made the attempt, and he little understood the magnanimous and commanding character of that great Englishman.

The appearance of a French ambassador in Moscow was naturally distasteful to the friends of the Grand Alliance. The Dutch were also afraid that French merchants might receive special privileges in Russia. Friendly relations between France and Russia had, indeed, existed at an earlier period. Potemkin had been sent as ambassador to Paris in the reign of Alexis, and Dolgorúky had held the same office, although with little success, during the regency of Sophia. If Peter had purposely avoided France during his European journey, it was because his mind was then set on the humiliation of Turkey, which was not an object of French diplomacy. He had now changed his views, and the door was open for communication with Louis XIV.

Baluze at first acted with great caution and secrecy, and it was not till February 1704, nearly a year after his arrival, that the object of the negotiations became known. Overtures were made for the education of Alexis, the Tsarevitch, in Paris, and Peter was invited to pay a visit to the French Court. Both these offers were declined, and Baluze could not congratulate himself on the success of his embassy. It was

also felt that Louis felt more disposed to capture the sympathies of Charles XII. than those of his Muscovite rival.

Postnikof, who represented Russia in France, without any definite diplomatic character, wrote for full information about Peter's internal reforms, which, he declared, were exciting great interest in the minds of the French. Russia, indeed, appeared to Frenchmen of that day in much the same light as Persia, China, or Japan, would fifty years ago have appeared to ourselves. When Postnikof attempted to engage French surgeons and barbers for the Russian service, he found that Moscow was believed to lie on the frontiers of India. He writes, "Only the devil knows what these people think of Moscow; they believe it to be at the end of the world." In fact, Russia was at this time only of interest to the Court of Versailles so far as it might affect her relations with Poland or with the Grand Turk.

In 1705 Matvéief went to Paris, but without any formal diplomatic character. He had an interview with Louis XIV., which was nothing but an empty ceremonial. The French were much disappointed that the mission of Baluze had been so entirely without result. The Ministers complained of the rough and barbaric character of previous Russian envoys. They had also heard that Peter had a special dislike to everything French. For instance, he had tasted champagne and found it much to his taste, but had spat it out of his mouth when he heard that it was a French wine. It was obvious that the sympathies of the French were entirely on the side of Sweden. So in October 1706 Matvéief returned to Holland without having been able to conclude a commercial treaty with Russia, or, indeed, to produce any other useful result.

It became obvious to Peter, as it had been to his predecessors, that if he wished to connect Russia with European interests he must not only break down the

barriers of Oriental custom which separated her from her neighbours, but that he must attract foreigners into his service who would represent Russia to the outer world, and make her real situation generally known. Much had been done by the employment of foreigners in the army and navy. What would Russia have been without Gordon and Lefort, Cruys and Perry, Croy and Ogilvy? A similar course must be pursued with regard to statesmanship and diplomacy. This explains the invitations given to Patkul, to Hnyssen and to Urbich. If Russia were represented at the Court of Vienna by a person who was in no way inferior to the ministers of other nations in political knowledge, diplomatic experience, and readiness in speech and language, the shame of the defeat of Narva might be more easily forgotten.

Johann Reinhold Patkul was undoubtedly the most distinguished of these men. His name has been vilified and his career misunderstood, and we are not yet in the possession of knowledge which may set his talents and activities in their true light. We have already heard (page 153) how in his early years he defended the privileges of the Livonian nobility against the encroachments of Charles XI.—how he was condemned to death, but escaped from prison in Stockholm, and wandered over Europe, devoting himself to study, and translated into French the work of Puffendorf on the duties of a man and a citizen. Despairing of pardon, he determined on revenge, and on the accession of Charles XII.—a mere boy, whose great qualities were not suspected—he was the soul of the quadruple coalition against Sweden of Poland, Denmark, Brandenburg, and Russia. He accompanied General Carlowitz in his mission to Moscow just before the outbreak of the war, and Peter may have then had an opportunity of recognising his enormous powers of work, his remarkable gifts, his many-sided culture, and his iron tenacity of purpose. Patkul had for some time acted

as the political adviser of King Augustus, and he was able to represent to that sovereign the true character of Peter's genius, and of his reforms and plans, which he undoubtedly completely understood. He was quite aware how dangerous the designs of Peter in the Gulf of Finland might be, both to Poland and Livonia; but he cherished the hope that in using him as an instrument he might prevent him from becoming a tyrannical master.

Patkul was a Livonian above everything else. His one object was the independence and the prosperity of his country. A little land, subject to the jealous cupidity of much stronger Powers, Sweden, Poland, and Russia, he hoped that he would be dexterous enough to make it subserve the interest of all without becoming the prey of any. Probably neither Augustus nor Peter knew that Patkul, while abetting their larger enterprises, was deeply intent on his own municipal aims. He played for high and patriotic stakes, but he suffered the fate of those who embark on enterprises too great for them, with accomplices who are always ready to sacrifice narrower for wider interests. He was betrayed by Augustus and murdered by Charles XII.

Patkul had played an important part in negotiating the treaty of Brize. On this occasion he had obtained a deeper knowledge of Peter's remarkable qualities, while nothing could increase his contempt for the morals and character of King Augustus and of those by whom he was surrounded. He preached the doctrine of war-to-the-knife with Sweden, but it fell upon the tame and unwilling ears of men who could follow no other cause than that of cunning duplicity and half-hearted compromise. He could not put his own fiery spirit in the hearts of those who would most profit by his advice.

On July 30th, 1702, Charles defeated the Poles at Clissow, and the city of Cracow opened its doors to the

conqueror. While Peter, half unnoticed, was slowly laying the foundations of his new empire, Augustus was retreating step by step in that humiliating retrogression which led, by the consequences of inevitable logic, to the shameful treaty of Altranstädt.

In the meantime Patkul entered the service of Russia, and became for certain purposes Peter's right-hand man. He was his principal adviser in the acquisition of generals, officers, artists, and other instruments of civilisation. He represented the interests of Russia at Polish Court. He was one of the chief advisers of the edict of toleration, published on April 27th, 1702, which invited foreigners to settle in Russia. On that very day Peter gave him a salary of a thousand thalers a month, presented him with an estate of four hundred families of serfs, and with his portrait set in diamonds, valued at three thousand rubles. Patkul was created General Commissary for all Peter's business in Germany. We find him actively employed in Poland, in Silesia, in Vienna, and in Paris. "He was ever on the alert," says Schuyler, "ever active, ever ready with word and pen wherever there seemed to him a point to be gained or an opportunity to be used. He advised and criticised Matvéief at The Hague; he disputed with Dolgorúky at Warsaw; he directed Huyssen in his literary campaign to influence public opinion throughout Europe; he carefully watched the manœuvres of the Court of Berlin; and he gave personal counsels to King Augustus." At the same time, by his peculiar temperament, and by the defects of his great qualities, he made himself more enemies than friends.

Poland was, indeed, at this time an unequal antagonist to Charles XII. Augustus had no money for serious objects. He spent everything he could on his mistresses, his operas and his plays. The Swedes had a strong party in the country, and Swedish money was used with great effect. The leading Poles cared

nothing for their country; each one sought only his own advantage. The Saxons were not much better; they had strong sympathies with Sweden, and looked to Charles as their patron rather than to Augustus. Even Dolgorúky saw that Poland could not long preserve her independence or even her existence. He also reported that the Poles were entirely unprepared for war, and could do nothing "unless God sent His Holy Spirit to bring them to reason." The deposition of Augustus was close at hand, and Charles began to look toward Stanislaus Leczinski as his successor. He was eventually proclaimed in July 1704.

Peter was delighted to see Charles "up to his neck in a morass." While he was sticking fast in Poland Peter could pursue his conquests in Ingria and Livonia. Patkul, anxious for the independence of his country, did all he could to divert Peter from his conquests and turn his attention to the campaign in Poland. He promised him, in this event, the assistance of the Elector of Brandenburg. But Peter was not to be diverted from his purpose. He founded St. Petersburg and captured Dörpat and Narva. Ten days after the storming of Narva, on August 30th, 1704, an offensive and defensive alliance against Sweden was concluded between Russia and Poland. Both Powers were to carry on the war in partnership, and to make no separate treaties. Peter promised to compel the Cossack Paléi to restore to Poland the towns he had taken in the Ukraine, and to surrender to the same Power all the towns he had taken in Livonia. He was also to furnish a contingent of twelve thousand men, and to furnish a subsidy of two hundred thousand rubles.

As the result of this, Patkul was sent to undertake the siege of Posen; but after waiting a long time for reinforcements, he was ordered to raise the siege on the very day fixed for storming the walls, and to retire into Saxony. The contingent of Peter was like

sheep without a shepherd. After various adventures, which it is not necessary to relate, they came to the conclusion that they could not stay where they were, nor return to Russia through Poland, and that therefore they had better enter the service of the Emperor for one year. A convention to this effect was concluded at Dresden.

The relations between Russia and Austria were not at this time of a very cordial character. After the disaster at Narva, there was some idea at Moscow of employing the mediation of the Emperor for concluding a peace with Sweden. But the ways of the Imperial Court were slow, and Golítsyn was not a very fortunate diplomatist.

There appeared at this time a work of Kort's on Russia, which represented the country and people as only half civilised; and Golítsyn found himself treated with very little respect. He declared that the Austrian statesmen were corrupt—that Swedish gold was making many friends for Charles. There was, indeed, a talk of educating the young Alexis at Vienna, or of marrying a Russian princess, one of the daughters of Iván, to an Austrian archduke. But neither of these propositions came to anything.

At the end of 1702 Patkul arrived at Vienna and did his best to persuade the Court that the interests of Russia and Austria were identical in their opposition to Charles XII. Kannitz would, however, have nothing to do with these suggestions. Patkul found, what he might have known would be the case, that the ambassadors of the Sea Powers, England and Holland, were bitterly opposed to any such alliance. Far greater than their fear of the aggrandisement of Russia was their anxiety lest the Imperial Court should be diverted by any other interest from pursuing the main objects of the Grand Alliance. Those who have studied the war of the Spanish Succession from the English side know that it required all Marlborough's

adroitness, and his unequalled power of persuasion, to keep that motley crew of allies firm in the persistent realisation of a common purpose.

Patkul had to depart without having effected his purpose. Golítsyn remained behind in Vienna, and made constant complaints about the avarice of Kaunitz and the difficult position in which he found himself. Patkul, among other things, had promised Kaunitz an annuity of five thousand ducats if he would work in the interests of Russia. Kaunitz, less scrupulous than Marlborough, accepted the offer, and was perpetually dunning for the money. Dolgorúky, however, declined to pay it, because it had not been earned by any services. His judgment upon the Austrian Cabinet is: "With their lips are they sweet, but in their hearts bitter."

CHAPTER XXII.

MENSHIKÓF AND CATHERINE.

IT will have been seen from our previous narrative that the success of Peter depended largely on the friends whom he had to help him. The story of his early career is inseparable from the names of Gordon and Lefort. In his later career we find others who take their places ; and none are more prominent than his favourite Menshikóf and his second wife Catherine. The parentage of Alexander Danílovitch Menshikóf is obscure. His father served in the guard and was buried at Preobrazhénsk, but we do not know what position he held in life. It was generally admitted that he was descended from a Lithuanian stock, and some of his relations held possessions in the neighbourhood of Minsk. He was born in November 1673, and was therefore a year and a half younger than Peter. It is not impossible that he at one time sold cakes in the streets of Moscow.

It is stated in the "Memories of Bruce" that Menshikóf's friendship with Peter began by his saving his life when he was in danger of being poisoned. Peter was dining in the house of a *boyar*, and Menshikóf was waiting behind his chair. At the moment when he was handing a certain dish to the Tsar, he whispered something into his ear. In fact, he had discovered, shortly before, that the Tsar was to be poisoned. The food was rejected and given to a dog, who died of it;

the *boyar* was arrested with his accomplices, and the servant became the favourite of his sovereign.

It is, however, certain that he was attached to Peter's service from his earliest boyhood, that he was numbered amongst his play-soldiers, and that he was one of the first to serve in the regiment of Preobrazhensk. He was one of the persons attached to the Tsar's personal service as *denstchik*, or orderly, and it was his duty to be with Peter day and night, sleeping, according to his turn, in the adjoining room or at the foot of his master's bed. He was indeed his valet, or what a valet would be to a man of ordinary rank. He was extremely handsome, ready and versatile, and distinguished in bodily exercises. He possessed also serious qualities of high merit. He had an astute judgment in affairs; he was brilliant in conversation; possessed an intimate knowledge of mankind, and great personal courage. During Peter's European travels he was useful to him in many ways, and rivalled him in the acquirement of technical skill. He accompanied Peter to the siege of Azof, helped him to put down the rebellion of the Streltsi, and boasted that he had cut off twenty of their heads with his own hand. He allowed his beard to be cut off by Peter himself, and in return cut off the beards of the municipality of Moscow. Still, it was not till after the siege of Notenburg that he seems to have been admitted to the full confidence of his sovereign, and took the place of Lefort as his confidant and adviser.

Many letters of Peter to him have been preserved. He addresses him as "My heart" or "My heart's child," "My dearest comrade," "My dearest friend," "My best of friends," or "My brother," all in German. He liked to call him by the familiar name of Alexáshka. As Peter began to extend his territories towards the Baltic, rewards were heaped upon the favourite. He was the first Governor of Schlüsselburg, and after-

wards of Nyenskantz and St. Petersburg, and at a later time of Ingria, Karelia, and Esthonia. We have already related how he was made a Knight of St. Andrew, together with the Tsar, and how the town of Oranienburg was founded in his honour. The Emperor, at Peter's request, first made him a Count of Hungary, and then a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. As a matter of course he was one of the first to be decorated with the titles of the new nobility which Peter formed around him.

These exaggerated honours produced their natural result. Menshikof assumed the airs, not so much of a Turkish Pasha as of an Oriental Grand Vizier. He was ambitious and avaricious. Disliked and feared at the Court, he was detested by the common people. Wherever he held command he became conspicuous for his greed and extortion. Peter could not pass over these serious faults. The letters of affection were interrupted by outbursts of anger; but Peter always relented after an apology. It is certain that Peter loved Menshikof with an unusual affection, but it is also the case that his talents and energy made him indispensable to Peter's designs; therefore, up to his death the Tsar committed the most important matters to his care, entrusted him with the most responsible duties, and heaped wealth and honours upon him. He saw in him the prop of the throne which he sought for in vain in his son Alexis. "Better," he once said, "a capable stranger than a good-for-nothing of your own blood." Indeed, for two years after Peter's death he was practically Emperor of Russia. At the same time, Peter once said to Catherine, who was never weary of taking his part, "Menshikof was conceived in iniquity, born in sin, and will end his life as a rascal and a cheat, and if he does not reform will lose his head." He possessed, indeed, the initiative, the untiring energy, and the wealth of new ideas which could not be found elsewhere, except in Peter himself.

The institution of maids-of-honour—girls who were brought up in the palace as companions to the female members of the royal family—seems always to have existed at the Russian Court. Natalia, Peter's sister, lived at Preobrazhénsk with a small Court. Among her attendants were three sisters—Dária, Barbara, and Axínia Arsénief. It was natural that Menshikóf should be admitted to their society on an intimate footing; and a close attachment sprang up between him and Dária Arsénief. When Menshikóf returned to Moscow in 1703 he took two of the Arséniefs to live with him in the house which he shared with his two sisters and his aunt. When one of his sisters married Alexis Golovín, her place was filled by Catherine Skavrónsky, who eventually became the Empress Catherine I.

Her family, of humble rank, were of Lithuanian origin, but had settled in Livonia. Being left an orphan at an early age, she was, out of charity, taken into the household of Pastor Gluck, of Marienburg, where she looked after the children and made herself generally useful. She was to have married a Swedish dragoon, but he was suddenly called away to his regiment, and was killed in 1705. On the capture of Marienburg by Sheremétief, Pastor Gluck and his family were sent to Moscow; but little Catherine, or Martha, as she was then called, remained behind with the Field-Marshal. She was seventeen years of age, and very pretty. She could neither read nor write, but Pastor Gluck had taught her many things, and she possessed quick intelligence and a merry humour. She was soon transferred to Menshikóf's house at Moscow, and it was here that Peter made her acquaintance, about the beginning of 1704. Their relations became very intimate, and during the year a child was born, who received the name of his father. Peter, who was absent from Moscow, wrote to the two Arséniefs: "I am really merry here. O mothers! do not abandon



CATHERINE I. (PETER'S SECOND WIFE

From the painting by Benner.

my little Petrúshka. Have some clothes made for him soon, and go as you will ; but order that he shall have enough to eat and drink, and give my regards, ladies, to Alexander Danílovitch." Two daughters followed—Anne and Elizabeth.

Catherine had been originally a Catholic, but when she was converted to the Greek Church the Tsarévitch Alexis stood sponsor for her, so that she received the name of Catherine Alexéjevna. Peter generally addressed her as "Mother," "Matka," or "Muder." In 1707 Catherine was privately married to Peter at St. Petersburg, but it was not till 1712 that she became his solemn and lawful wife. On August 29th, 1706, Menshikóf had married Dária Arsénief.

Catherine was a great contrast to Eudoxia. Notwithstanding her humble birth, she showed extraordinary ability in comprehending the situation in which she was placed, and in fitting herself to perform her duty in it. Husband and wife were devoted to each other. Her natural amiability and the intelligence with which she entered into his plans, gave her a certain influence over his impetuous nature. Like Lefort, she was able to calm him in his moments of passion, and to soothe the violence of his nervous outbreaks. She was his faithful friend and his constant companion. She shared his labours and his anxieties. She accompanied him into the field, and bore with him the dangers of the campaign on the Pruth, and of the Turkish War, as we shall afterwards relate.

A large portion of the correspondence between Peter and Catherine has been preserved, and is very amusing in tone. They chat at their ease about all kinds of things, trivial and important. They make each other little presents, and prepare for each other little surprises. The letters are full of natural, unrestrained good humour, and if sometimes wanting in dignity, not the less valuable in showing the change which had come over the Russian Court. Peter's predecessor had lived

the life of a sainted recluse, half god, half idol, but very little of a man. Peter lived to enter into every form of life, and to regard it, as far as possible, from the amusing side. His energy, activity, and occasional cruel severity, dictated generally by a strict but mistaken sense of duty, found its natural counterpart in the exaggeration of buoyant spirits. It was well for him that on this side of his nature he had a companion who would meet him more than half-way. At the same time, he gave her the first news of all his victories and initiated her into his political plans.

There is no evidence to show that Catherine took an active part in the crusade of Peter against his son Alexis, although there is no doubt that his disinheritation was an apparent advantage to her own child. The voice of scandal may say much against Catherine, both during her life and after her death. But it is a safe rule, in judging the characters of historical personages, to make sure that we have realised their good qualities before we set ourselves to unveil their faults. Similarly, it is more reasonable to attribute an important action of a great man rather to a rational than an irrational motive. Tried by this standard, it will seem to have been a blessing to Russia that Peter should have been succeeded by Catherine, whether it was his desire that she should succeed him or not.

The law of inheritance to the crown, which gave Peter the right of appointing his successor, dates from February 16th, 1722. It was undoubtedly directed against the son of Alexis. A little later, when Peter assumed the title of Emperor, his wife received that of Empress. Towards the end of 1723 Peter announced his intention of solemnly crowning Catherine, and the ceremony took place on May 18th, 1724. The reason assigned for it was the part which Catherine had played in several campaigns, and especially her conduct on the Pruth, where she asserted herself, not as a weak woman, but with the courage of a man. All this

may have portended the desire of Peter to leave the throne to Catherine, but there is no reason to believe that he anticipated an early death, or that he thought that he would not have plenty of time in which to settle the question of the succession. No one could have supposed that he would have survived the coronation of his wife only by a few months. The coronation of the Tsarévitch was quite contrary to precedent, and indeed, had only been practised once before when Maria Minskek was married to the false Demetrius.

Whatever may have been the designs of Peter, it was undoubtedly a piece of good fortune that Catherine and Menshikóf, the two who stood nearest to Peter in his life, whom he was wont to call the children of his heart, should assume the government after his death. This was the best means of securing continuity in the administration of the country. Many believed that the somewhat artificial government of Russia, fashioned by the will of its founder, would break to pieces after his departure. By the succession of Catherine this danger was prevented. After her decease and the banishment of Menshikóf, there were many men in Russia, penetrated with Peter's ideas, who could rule and govern in accordance with them. But if the sceptre of the empire had fallen, at first, into different hands, much time might have been lost and much mischief might have been caused,

CHAPTER XXIII.

ATTEMPTS AT PEACE.

WHILST the whole force of Peter's energies were directed, at this time, to forming a Russian Empire of a modern type, and Charles XII. was straining the resources of his genius to extricate himself from the toils of his enemies and to place his country in the position which she had before occupied, the most civilised parts of Europe were occupied with the struggle between Louis XIV. and the Grand Alliance, and in 1705 had not recovered from the overwhelming shock of Blenheim. Anne and Louis would gladly have secured the assistance of either Peter or Charles, and, if that were impossible, would have mediated for peace between them. In 1705 the English diplomatist Whitworth appeared at Moscow, with the view of securing advantages for English merchants in Russia. He stated that his sovereign would be glad to exercise her friendly offices in the interests of peace but that from what he had heard on his journey, Charles XII. would not hear of anything of the kind.

However, as a further step, Matvéief was sent from Holland to England in the following year, with the view of negotiating the adhesion of Russia to the Grand Alliance. Peter was prepared to furnish troops for the war against France, to supply a large quantity of timber for the building of ships, and asked in return that the possessions which he had conquered in

the Gulf of Finland might be secured to him. Matvéief was instructed to point out that the occupation of a port in the Baltic by Russia could not be otherwise than advantageous to England, because it would be much more commodious for the export of English goods than the road by Archangel, which was now followed. By parity of reasoning Russian goods would reach England by a shorter road and could be sold much cheaper. The Tsar was willing to limit the number of ships which he would maintain in the Baltic, but he instructed his ambassador not to be too explicit on this point, or to mention any particular number. Matvéief was instructed, as a last resource, to endeavour to exert personal pressure over Marlborough and Godolphin, and to offer them large presents; but in the draft, which was probably composed by Menshikóf, Peter added with his own hand : "I do not think that Marlborough can be influenced in this manner, because he is enormously rich ; but you may promise a few hundred thousand or so, and more." Every one, at this time, believed that he could bribe Marlborough, but no one succeeded in doing so.

Matvéief arrived in London in May 1707, and found, what any one might have expected from the existing ministry, fair words and no promises. Matvéief learnt for the first time, as Talleyrand learnt at the end of the century, the difference between Whigs and Tories, and the partisans of the House of Stuart and the House of Hanover ; but he had great difficulty in explaining their differences to the Russian Government. The merchants and the moneyed classes were too much devoted to Godolphin to take an independent line. Matvéief journeyed to Windsor, but with no result. Finally, Queen Anne gave him an audience in September, and said that she was ready to make an alliance with the Tsar ; and Harley talked over the terms of it in the honeyed phrases which we know so well.

Of course the consent of Holland was necessary,

and Marlborough promised to obtain it; but when he returned from that country in November, he confessed that he had not been able to do anything. No one wonders that Matvéief should write home: "The ministry here is more subtle even than the French in *finesse* and intrigue, their smooth and empty words being nothing but loss of time." But the explanation is very simple. Charles was now at the height of his power, and the allies were terribly afraid that he would join the French. A close alliance of the Maritime Powers with Russia might have thrown him into the arms of Louis, and have given a totally different character to the war. It was the policy of England not to estrange Peter, but it would have been madness to have bought his friendship at the price of the hostility of Charles.

Marlborough, with his usual directness, hit off the situation in a letter to Godolphin, written even before Matvéief had left Holland for England. He says, from The Hague, April 20th, 1707: "The Ambassador of Muscovy has been with me, and made many expressions of the great esteem which his master has for her Majesty; that he would do everything to merit her friendship; and as a mark of it he had resolved to send his only son into England; but he desired that nobody but the Queen might know it, as he must pass *incognito* through several countries. He is also very desirous of the honour, as he calls it, of the Queen appointing him a house. As it can be of no precedent to any country but their own, and as the expense is so very inconsiderable, I hope her Majesty will do it; for it is certain that you will not be able to gratify him in any part of his negotiations."

Huyssen, a secret agent of Peter's, reported, probably on very slight foundation, that Marlborough, while he refused money, had declared that he would co-operate with Peter's interests if he were given a Principality in Russia. The answer induced him in reply to say

that if Marlborough desired a Russian Principality, he might have either Kíef, Vladímir, or Siberia. "You can promise him also that if he can persuade the Queen to make a good peace for us with the Swedes, he shall receive as the revenues of his Principality, fifty thousand ducats for every year of his life, in addition to the order of St. Andrew, and a ruby as large as any in Europe." Nothing came of this, and the whole story appears apocryphal.

Similar offers were made to Marlborough's illustrious friend and comrade in arms, Prince Eugene of Savoy. After the conclusion of the peace of Altranstädt, the crown of Poland was vacant, and Peter was not inclined to accept Stanislaus Leczinski, who was a mere instrument of Charles XII. He therefore instructed Huyssen to approach Eugene on the subject. Eugene, then at Milan, wrote to decline the honour. When Huyssen paid a personal visit to Eugene to press his views, the Prince replied that the decision would lie with the Emperor. In June 1707 Huyssen reported that both the Prince and the Emperor were willing to consider the question, but that nothing definite could be done till the conclusion of the war. We must remember that both Menshikóf and the Tsarévitch Alexis were possible candidates for the Polish throne.

The peace of Altranstädt had evidently placed Peter in great difficulty, and he was afraid that Charles, now free from his Western pre-occupation, might ruin his plans. He sought the mediation of Prussia and the co-operation of Denmark, promising the latter the towns of Dorpat and Narva, as a price of their alliance; but with no effect. The hand of the Grand Alliance was heavy on them. At last Peter was driven to take a bolder step; he sought the mediation of Louis XIV. himself. He promised to supply troops to the French king, to use exactly as he pleased, if he would only bring about an acceptable peace. Peter then learnt that Charles absolutely refused to make peace until

Peter would surrender his conquests unconditionally, and also pay the expenses of the war. He would rather sacrifice the last subject he possessed than that Petersburg should remain in the hands of Peter.

All these things show the little consideration in which Russia was held at this period ; and nothing exhibits it more clearly than the arrest of Patkul. Patkul was now at Dresden as the minister of Peter. He had, in some degree, lost the confidence of his master, but he was still his accredited servant. It had been one of the conditions of the treaty of Altranstädt that Patkul should be delivered up to the vengeance of Charles. The unfortunate man had just become engaged to a rich widow, and had bought an estate in Switzerland, where he intended to pass the rest of his days in peace. He was arrested, at night, in his own house, on the return from his betrothed, and was carried off to the castle of Sonnenstein, in the neighbourhood of Pirna. His letters and papers were seized, and he was prevented from communicating with any one.

This flagrant breach of international law, in the arrest of a foreign minister in the discharge of his functions, fell like a thunderbolt on the chanceries of Europe. Envoys withdrew, Peter protested ; but all in vain. The prisoner was transferred to the closer custody of Königstein. At the last moment Augustus attempted to evade the necessity of Patkul's surrender, and it is said gave him an opportunity of escape. However that may be, Patkul was delivered to General Meyerfeld on April 18th, 1707, and was executed at Kasimierz, not far from Posen, on October 10th. He was broken on the wheel. The executioner gave him fourteen or fifteen blows on the back, during which he screamed and groaned greatly, and called on God and Christ. After receiving two blows on the breast he was more quiet, and merely murmured, "Take my head off," and then crawled along the scaffold and laid his

head upon the block. The head was only severed at the fourth blow. So perish the weaker vessels who meddle with designs too great for them. He failed in all his projects. His beloved Livonia went to Russia. Still, his memory deserves to be kept green.

Nothing remained for Peter but to fight it out with Charles. To obtain admission into the family of European nations, Peter must nerve himself to that supreme conflict which ended in the decisive victory of Poltáva. The new establishment on the banks of the Neva, the re-organisation of Russia, the consolidation of the Russian Empire as a first-class power, could only be secured by the absolute subjection of the Swedish king. The mighty duel was now at hand, by the results of which the future of Europe was to be determined, even more than by the Western war, which attracted so much more prominently the attention and the anxieties of statesmen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE INVASION OF RUSSIA.

UP to the year 1705 the attention of Peter had been mainly directed to securing a firm footing in the Baltic. So he had kept the operations on the Neva, before Dorpat and Narva, under his own supervision, and had left the campaign in Poland to the care of others. The time had now come when he thought it more necessary to pay attention to what was going on in Poland, and therefore, in April 1705, he made his appearance in Polótsk, where he found a Russian army of eighty thousand strong awaiting his arrival. He divided the army into two parts, and gave the command of it to Sheremétief and Ogilvy, who both held the rank of field-marshal. As had before been the case, there was not complete harmony between the Russian and the Scot ; and after Shermétief's departure to another scene of action there came a similar feud between Ogilvy and Menshikóf. It was hard for a general used to more civilised conditions to put up with the rough incompleteness of the Russian army—the bad equipment, the defects of the arms, the want of transport, the failure of money and provisions, and the inexperience of the Russian officers.

From Polótsk Peter marched to Wilna ; but on the evening before his departure a scene occurred which has been made the most of by Peter's enemies. It is difficult to ascertain the exact truth, but the story runs thus :—Out of curiosity he paid a visit, with some of

his officers, to a monastery, a short distance from Polótsk, which belonged to the sect of the Uniates, or United Greek Church, a sect which, originally orthodox, and still keeping up many Eastern rites, had been forced by the Polish kings, who were Catholics, to submit to the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome. Peter was, of course, regarded by them as a heretic, and they objected to his passing into the holy of holies, as in a Russian church he would have been allowed to do. Seeing a picture more richly decorated than the others, he inquired what it was, and was told that it represented the blessed Josaphat Kuntsevitch, Bishop of Polótsk, who had been killed by a mob at Vitebsk in 1623, and had been beatified by Pope Urban VIII. in 1643. He was afterwards advanced to the dignity of a Saint by Pius IX. Peter then asked what was meant by the axe which he held in his hand, and the reply was, "That is the instrument with which the heretical Russians murdered him."

Upon this Peter hit his informant in the eye, and ordered his suite to arrest all the priests and monks in the monastery, and to try them as traitors, which they probably were. The monks resisted, and the Russians drew their swords. In the *mêlée* four monks were killed; a fifth, who had been guilty of apostasy, was arrested, condemned to death, and hanged on the following day. Peter regretted what had happened, for, on arriving at Wilna, he published an exculpation of himself; and it is probable that, if all the circumstances were known, his share in the matter would be found to have been exaggerated.

Peter had expressly charged his field-marshal not to risk an action. But news shortly reached him that on July 26th Sheremétief had been completely defeated at Gemanerthof, near Mitau, by Count Adam Lewenhaupt, who went by the name of "the Latin Colonel," from his fluency in speaking that language. The Russian loss was heavy, and Peter afterwards attri-

buted the catastrophe to the bad discipline of the Russian troops. He now wrote to Sheremétief: "Do not be too much cast down about your misfortune. Continuous success has brought many to destruction. Do not forget to encourage your soldiers." The Russians had, indeed, fought bravely, and had captured the citadel of Mitau, so that Peter, coming from Wilna, was able to complete his possession of the town, and in a few days was practically master of Curland. Sheremétief, however, had not been able to cut off Lewenhaupt from Riga, and Peter wrote to Golovín: "We have here a great misfortune, for Lewenhaupt flies before us as Narcissus fled before Echo."

Notwithstanding this success, Peter was by no means sure of victory. It had become necessary to send Sheremétief off to Circassia to put down a revolt, and Ogilvy was left in command. But he did not get on with Menshikóf, who alleged special knowledge of the intentions of the Tsar. Charles XII. was at this time at Warsaw, assisting at the coronation of Stanislaus Leczinski; but he might at any moment move northwards and attack the Russians. Therefore, instead of taking Riga and confirming his possession of Curland, Peter went to Grodno, where he was joined by his army under Ogilvy. Here also he met King Augustus, to whom he committed the command of his troops, returning himself to Moscow. During the winter, hearing that Charles was likely to attack Grodno, he gave strict orders not to risk a battle, and also that, in the event of a retreat, all the cannon were to be thrown into the river Niéman.

In fact, Charles, advancing from Warsaw, arrived within sight of Grodno on January 24th, 1706. He crossed the Niéman two miles below the town, and advanced to the very walls, but did not attempt a storm. A council of war was called by King Augustus, to decide whether they should march out and attack the Swedes, should remain in Grodno and stand a

siege, or should retreat. Ogilvy was strongly in favour of remaining, but the majority of the council were in favour of a retreat. Augustus, however, left the decision to the Tsar, retiring himself to Warsaw, and promising Ogilvy that he would return in three weeks with a Saxon army, which, in the meantime, was going to beat Rehnskjöld. On receiving the news of Charles' advance, Peter set out for Smolensk, intending to proceed to the scene of action. He was met by Menshikóf at Dubróvna, and assured that further advance was impossible, as Grodno was invested by the Swedes. Peter wrote to Ogilvy, leaving the question of the retreat to his judgment, but bidding him spare the soldiers and not to mind the heavy guns. "What is best for safety and profit, that do with every caution." Ogilvy replied that he could not retreat, because the rivers were frozen and the Swedes would harass him with their cavalry; that there were no horses to drag away the guns; and that the mounts of the dragoons had no horseshoes. He had therefore determined to stay till the summer, hoping that either the Swedes would go away, or that he would be joined by the Saxons.

News now came that the Saxon army, so anxiously expected, had been entirely defeated by Rehnskjöld or Fraustadt on the frontier of Silesia. On hearing of this, Peter gave Ogilvy the most stringent orders to retreat, which he obeyed very unwillingly, and went off to St. Petersburg. The Russians began their march on April 4th, and reached Kief on May 19th. Charles had great hopes of cutting them off, but he was delayed by the breaking up of the ice on the Niéman, which Peter had foreseen. After attempting in vain to come up with his enemies, he contented himself with laying waste the district of Pinsk, and in the middle of July returned to Altranstädt. About the same time Peter arrived at Kief, having been met at Smolensk by Menshikóf. He waited here for six

weeks, expecting that the Swedes would advance, and spent his time in strengthening the fortifications of the town. Ogilvy now pressed strongly to be allowed to retire from the Russian service. After some discussion, permission was given, and his salary was paid in full. He entered the service of King Augustus, and served in Saxony with the rank of field-marshal. Four years later he died at Danzig, and was buried at Warsaw with distinguished honours.

Charles XII. had long desired the abdication of Augustus, but the allies in the great struggle of the Spanish Succession were opposed to so serious a step, as it might have the effect of deranging their combinations. However, the news of the battle of Ramillies decided him. A signal victory on the part of the allies might secure the position of Augustus and render that of Stanislaus Leczinski more precarious. Charles therefore determined upon his memorable march into Saxony which has made the name of Altranstädt, now scarcely known amongst its near neighbours, famous in the history of Europe. Established in an old country house, about three miles from the better known village of Markranstädt, Charles gave the law to Saxony, to Poland, and, to a great extent, to Europe. To this unworthy spot, described by Stepney as the dirtiest place in Saxony, the cleanest part of which is the court before the house, where every one sinks in the mud up to his knees, Marlborough and other great diplomatists journeyed as upon a pilgrimage, and towards it the eyes of the civilised world were directed. Here the treaty of Altranstädt was signed on October 24th, 1706, and the next day a truce was declared for ten weeks.

Charles had left General Marderfelt behind him with about eighteen thousand men to keep order during his absence, while Menshikóf was established at Lublin. Here Augustus became his guest, being, at the time, quite aware of what was going on at Altranstädt.

He was, indeed, in a great difficulty. He knew that Menshikóf was advancing to crush Marderfelt. He knew also that peace was on the point of being signed. Acting ostensibly as the ally of Russia, and receiving a Russian subsidy, he sent a letter of warning to Marderfelt which did not reach him in time, and eventually a battle took place at Kalisz on October 29th, three days after the conclusion of the truce. The Swedes were badly beaten, losing three thousand men, and the remainder surrendered the following day. Menshikóf praised in his reports the conduct of the Russian army, and Peter celebrated his victory by several days of deep potations. The foreign envoys in Moscow were struck with amazement. Peter invited them to a banquet. The English and the Danish ambassadors expressed the opinion that matters might now take a completely different turn, and the Prussian envoy expressed his satisfaction with the Swedish defeat. Pleyer also reported to the Austrian court the glorious triumph and the magnificent victory of Menshikóf, and had much to relate of the rewards and honours bestowed upon the conquering army.

What a terrible surprise must have been the news of the peace of Altranstädt! Augustus was heartily ashamed of it, and it was not communicated to the Russian Court till the beginning of November. Dolgorúky remonstrated with Augustus, received some stammering excuses in return, and promises to remain a faithful ally to Peter. Pleyer tells us that in Moscow all was confusion; that the populace were so embittered against the Germans that disturbances were feared; that there might be a general massacre; and that King Augustus was denounced as a traitor to God and man. There was a Russian army in Saxony, and no one knew what would become of it. It had, by Peter's permission, been lent to the Empress for a year, but its future destination had to be determined. There was also the disgrace of Patkul's execution.

Knowing nothing of what had happened, Peter left St. Petersburg in December 1706, intending to keep his Christmas at Moscow. At Narva he received a courier from Menshikóf, with the news of the treaty of Altranstädt, and of the departure of Augustus for Saxony. He therefore went straight to Volhynia, where he found his army in winter quarters, and passed more than four months at Zolkiew, near Lemberg. He was surrounded by his chief advisers, Menshikóf, Sheremétief, Repnín, Prince Gregory Dolgorúky, and Mazeppa, Hetman of the Cossacks. His son Alexis, then eighteen years of age, came on from Moscow and stayed till the middle of May. A diet of the Confederates of Sandomir was sitting at Lemberg, but was entirely without counsel. Peter wrote to Apráxin: "Everything here is like new wine, and we do not yet know what it will be like." It was whilst in this condition that Peter made the feverish overtures for peace related in the previous chapter, and imagined various possible candidates for the throne of Poland. Golófskin was now foreign secretary in the place of Golóvin, who was dead, and he remained with Peter to assist him in these negotiations.

When these failed there was nothing left but to prepare for a mortal struggle. Peter gave orders to Apráxin to take every means for defending the frontiers against attack. Although no definite news had arrived of the departure of Charles from Saxony, it was better to have everything in readiness. Orders were given that all provisions and cattle should be hidden when the Swedes made their appearance, that they might be induced to penetrate farther into the country and thus be more easily surrounded and attacked in the rear. Special instructions were sent to Mazeppa, the Hetman of the Cossacks. Earthworks were to be thrown up on the Dniéper, palisades erected at convenient spots, the fortress of Kief placed in a condition of defence. Peter himself undertook the duty of com-

pleting the army. New devices were invented for raising taxes, and for pressing men into military service who had as yet contrived to escape the burden.

Occupied with diplomatic difficulties, chiefly with regard to Austria, Charles gave the Tsar plenty of time for preparation. He did not leave Saxony till October 1707, but he left it at the head of a magnificent army. It was composed of forty-four thousand men, in splendid condition, of whom twenty-four thousand were cavalry. He believed that at the head of this force he could dictate peace to Peter as he had already dictated it to Augustus. He talked of deposing the Tsar and placing Jacob Sobiesky on the throne of Muscovy. He also declared that he did not intend to waste time in besieging frontier fortresses, but to march straight to the capital. He calculated on being assisted by the Russian opposition, and by the disaffection which had been caused by Peter's reforms, the burdens and dangers of the war, and the many despotic acts of which Peter had been guilty.

The opinion of Europe was not so confident as Charles himself. The Court of Vienna held a more balanced judgment. Huyssen, who was Peter's representative in Vienna, wrote in September 1707 that the Swedes were marching unwillingly, and that they had become unaccustomed to war after their long repose in Saxony. He added : " Some even predict a Russian victory, while others say that there would be less glory, but also far less danger, if the Tsar should withdraw his troops from Poland, and diminish the forces of the enemy by petty skirmishes and by sudden attacks of Cossacks, depending not so much upon valour as upon stratagem.

Peter took counsel with his generals, and decided not to resist the enemy in Poland, but to entice him into Russia. They would begin by avoiding a decisive battle, and content themselves with holding, as far as possible, the passages of the rivers against the Swedes.

The stake was indeed a serious one. Charles was enveloped in a halo of invincibility. Peter could not look towards the future without deep emotion. This produced a bad effect upon his temper. He became very irritable, and was less able than usual to command his anger. We must remember that besides the invasion of his kingdom by one who was by some believed to be the greatest general of his age, the rebellion in Astrakhan had not been altogether suppressed, and the mutiny on the Don was at its highest pitch.

Charles XII. lay encamped for four months at Slupce, on the bank of the Vistula. The reasons for this are not known, but one of his motives was probably that he might be able to cross the river when it was frozen. He certainly did pass on January 9th, 1708, at the earliest moment that the ice would bear. His soldiers treated the Poles as enemies, and were bitterly hated by them. The remonstrances of King Stanislaus produced no effect. The French Ambassador, as quoted by Schuyler, wrote: "The Swedes hold the Poles in contempt; even the King is so angry over their weak and wretched behaviour that he has no compassion for them individually or collectively." He chose an unfrequented road along the frontiers of Prussia, and had to undergo all kinds of hardships. The King and his soldiers were forced to bivouac in the snow without tents, and many lives were lost through cold and fatigue. So many horses died from frost that a large portion of the baggage had to be abandoned. The wild population hid behind trees and bushes and shot down the Swedish troops. Charles himself narrowly escaped death. In order to put a stop to this, the King ordered a general massacre in which even women and children were not spared. This severity, of course, increased their hatred of the invaders.

Peter, after spending his Christmas in Moscow, arrived at Grodno on February 1st. He took measures for securing the safety of Pskof and Dorpat. A large portion of the inhabitants of the latter city were removed to Vologda, as the Russians could not trust their loyalty, an act of high-handed tyranny which was not readily forgiven. Charles, hearing that Peter was in Grodno, hastened thither with a small force, and, crossing the bridge, entered the town only two hours after Peter had left it. Setting an example, which was followed by his countrymen in 1812, Peter again assumed the defensive, gave orders for the retreat, destroyed his supplies of provisions, and entrusted the command of the rear guard to his most capable officers. This conduct may not have been heroic, but it was safe. The fever from which he was suffering at this time gave him an additional reason for avoiding a battle. In fact, at the end of March we find him at St. Petersburg, which was always a place of comfort to him. He wrote from thence to Menshikóv that he was to be summoned to the seat of war whenever a battle should be imminent. He thought it not improbable that Charles would march upon Moscow. He ordered the towns of Sérpukhof, Mozháisk, and Tver, to be strongly fortified. Martial law was proclaimed in the city itself. The inhabitants were placed under strict surveillance, especially the foreigners; persons of all ranks were set to work at the fortifications; orders were issued that every one was to be ready, at any moment, either for fight or flight.

It is noticeable that the Tsarévitch Alexis took an important share in these stringent measures. He sent to Peter regular reports as to the progress of the defensive works, and of the proceedings of the Commission which conducted them. He possessed something of the feverish energy of his father. At the same time, he was by no means sanguine of success. He advised his confessor Ignátief to leave

Moscow, on the ground that, if the Tsar could not succeed in stopping the Swedish king, little assistance could be looked for in the capital itself.

From Grodno Charles proceeded to Smorgoni, famous as the place at which Napoleon left his army in 1812, and then turned in a south-easterly direction to Radóshkovitchi, where he stayed till June. Leaving this place on June 17th, he reached the Berezína on June 29th. The Russians were prepared to dispute the passage at Borisof, the point where Napoleon had crossed the river in 1812; but Charles, making a feint in that direction with a few regiments under Colonel Sparre, contrived to pass the stream in safety lower down.

Sheremétief and Menshikóf were determined to oppose the passage of the Swedes at the River Bibitch, and took up a strong position at the town of Golóftchin. Unfortunately, the left wing under Repnín was posted in such a position that, owing to swamps and marshes, it could not be supported by the rest of the army. Charles, making good use of his artillery, advanced under cover of its fire, and, attacking Repnín with the bayonet, drove the Russians back. The main body of the army not being able to come up, the whole force retreated to the River Dniéper, occupying the towns of Mohiléf, Sklof, and Kopos. Although the Swedes had lost more than the Russians in the engagement, Peter ordered a strict inquiry, and came to the conclusion that a part of his army had not done its duty. He was specially angry with Repnín.

On reviewing the results of the battle, it was determined to abandon Mohiléf, and to concentrate on the other bank of the Dniéper, thus defending the road to Smolénsk and Moscow. Charles occupied Mohiléf and awaited there the arrival of Lewenhaupt, who was expected from Livonia with a reinforcement of sixteen thousand men as well as artillery and provisions. He was, however, too impatient to wait long,

and moved forward to Dóbry, where he fought a battle with the Russians on September 9th, at which Peter was present in person. It could hardly be called a victory for the Russians, although they fought bravely. It seems that they were able to drive back the advanced guard of the Swedes, but that when Charles came up they were compelled to retreat. Peter, however, treated it as a victory. He gave Golítsyn the order of St. Andrew, and wrote to Apráxin: "I solemnly assure you that, since I began to serve, I have never seen such fine or such orderly conduct on the part of our soldiers (God grant it so in future as well!), and the Swedish king himself has not seen such an action in the course of the war. O God, do not take away Thy mercy from us for the future!"

The toils of fate were now gathering around Charles. His success depended upon two events, his junction with Lewenhaupt, and the co-operation of Mazeppa, with twenty thousand Cossacks of the Ukraine. He apparently had not patience or tenacity enough to effect either. On September 26th, when Lewenhaupt was only sixty miles distant, and might easily have been reached, he began his march southward in the hope of meeting with Mazeppa. Lewenhaupt had left Charles in May, with instructions to get together all the forces he could muster. Ordered in June to join the King on the Berezína, he could not start till July, and was then compelled to march so slowly that he only arrived at Sklof on the Dniéper on September 28th. Here he received orders to cross the Dniéper and to march into the Ukraine. He did his best, but on October 9th was attacked by the Russians, who had been hanging in his rear.

The battle of Propoisk was not so decisive in its character as in its results. Peter wrote in his diary: "This victory may be called our first, for we had never had such a one over regular troops. In truth it was the cause of all the subsequent good fortune of Russia,

for it was the first proof of our soldiers, and it put hearts into our men, and was the mother of the battle of Poltava." Lewenhaupt finally succeeded in joining Charles ; but he brought to him only six thousand men, instead of the eleven thousand with which he started from Riga.

Besides the loss of reinforcements, which were sorely wanted, Charles had also to suffer from the deficiency of provisions, which Lewenhaupt would have supplied in large quantities. Undoubtedly also the moral effect of the battle was very powerful on both sides, encouraging the Russians and depressing the Swedes. Nor did misfortunes come to Charles singly. He had hoped to make a powerful attack on Cronstadt and St. Petersburg, both by sea and land. But both parts of this project failed. The fleet could not be equipped from want of money, and only a small portion, under Admiral Anckarstjerna took the sea. This was inferior to the Russian fleet, which thus remained master of the Gulf of Finland. Meantime, the land army under Lybecker committed every sort of error and met with every kind of disaster. Not only was the expedition, on which Charles laid so much stress, an entire failure, but the Swedes lost three thousand men in attempting what they were unable to perform. Just at this moment, when Peter had every confidence that he would triumph over his enemies, he received a deadly blow by the news of the treachery of Mazeppa.

CHAPTER XXV.

MAZEPPA.

THE word Cossack, or Kazák, is of Tartar origin, meaning first a free, homeless vagabond, and then one of the partisans or Guérilla warriors formed out of such vagabonds. In this manner it may be connected with the *klephts* of the Greeks, and with some of the South Italian *briganti*, who, while occasionally plundering their neighbours, made themselves respectable by devotion to a political ideal. "The Cossacks," says Schuyler, "were a characteristic manifestation of the time—a national protest against the governmental forms which did not satisfy the Russian ideal." The ideal of the Cossacks was the fullest personal freedom, absolute possession of the soil, an elective government, justice administered by themselves, entire equality between the members of the society, disregard of all privileges of rank and birth. The only bond which united them was that of mutual defence against external enemies. This bond was strengthened by the fact that they were surrounded by Tartars and other hostile tribes; and the fact that their enemies were not Christians tended to deepen their love of the orthodox religion.

We find the Cossacks first arising as a class in the middle of the sixteenth century. They made their appearance in different localities, on the borders of Poland, on the Don, in the South, and in the extreme East. They were composed of men who wished to

evade the necessity of compulsory work for the lord of the soil. They were the necessary product of those tendencies of the age which were unfavourable to personal liberty, and which strengthened the hand of the landlord over the tenant. They were the backwater of the movement which created serfdom. The development of Cossacks in the Ukraine, or borderland, was due to the efforts of certain governors in that district, who formed them into a military class to repulse the invasions of the Tartars.

The Zaporovian Cossacks, as they are called, have a slightly different origin. The *poroghi*, *par excellence*, are the cataracts of the Dniéper, in the neighbourhood of Alexándrovsk, and the Zaporovians are people who dwell behind the cataracts. In the tenth century persons began to settle below these dangerous cataracts for the purpose of catching the fish and the wild animals which are there in abundance. The constant struggle with the Tartars gave them a military and a political organisation. They built fortified refuges upon the islands which were called Sjétschi, and to these only unmarried men were admitted, and women were excluded. They chose a chief by popular election as Ataman or Hetman, who was useful for leading them in marauding expeditions against Poland. One of these was Taras Bulba, the hero of a poem by Gógol. Since the Dniéper has ceased to be a frontier stream, the Zaporovians have gradually lost their independence, and a part of them have been removed to the Caucasus. The last Sjétscha was surrendered in 1775.

In this war the Cossacks were divided into two branches, those of the towns in the Ukraine, who, living in settled habitations, were obliged to recognise the Polish authority; and the Zaporovians, who, although they owed a kind of allegiance to the Hetman of Little Russia, were practically independent, siding sometimes with the Turks, sometimes with the Tartars,

and sometimes with their own countrymen. The Polish Government saw the necessity of regulating these outlaws. Stephen Batóri, King of Poland, divided the Cossacks into six regiments of a thousand each, and put them under the command of a Hetman. These registered Cossacks had the freedom of their lands, and paid no taxes. But, as a matter of fact, the actual Cossacks, recruited by those to whom a free life was an irresistible attraction, always exceeded the legal number. The lists were purified from time to time ; but those who were struck off formed themselves into bands and chose their Hetman. The Cossacks, therefore, were not a separate race or nation, but a motley collection of outcasts from a more civilised society, drawn together by common interests, and united by common dangers. As such, they are a most interesting phenomenon in political science.

Meanwhile, other forces were at work to dis sever the Cossacks from Poland and to unite them with Russia. The movement in Lithuania and Poland for the union between the Greek and Romish churches was confined to the landed classes. The townspeople and the serfs only accepted it under compulsion, while the Cossacks rejected it altogether. Their hatred of their lords confirmed them in their devotion to the religion which their lords had renounced. Thus rebellion succeeded to rebellion, and they turned their eyes with increasing fervour to Moscow as the citadel of orthodoxy. In 1654, under their Hetman Bogdan Khmelnitzky, they became *de facto* independent of Poland, and placed themselves under the protection of the Tsar.

Iván Stepánovitch Mazeppa was born about nine years before the event last mentioned. He was a handsome youth, had been educated at a Jesuit school, and had been page in the Court of King Jan Casimir. His early life was full of storms. In a moment of impatience he committed the offence of draw-

ing his sword in the precincts of the Court, and for this was punished with the somewhat light penalty of exile. While living with his mother in Volhynia, he engaged in an intrigue with the wife of a neighbouring nobleman. The injured husband stripped him and tied him to his own horse, which was so terrified by whips and pistols that it rushed furiously through woods and thickets, and brought its master home so torn and bleeding as hardly to be recognised. This is the somewhat prosaic account of an adventure which has made the name of Mazeppa known throughout the civilised world, has inspired the genius of Byron and of Berlioz, and the emulation of Astley's Circus.

This mishap was sufficient to drive Mazeppa into the arms of the Cossacks. He was a well-educated man and knew German and Latin as well as Russian and Polish. Probably for this reason he was frequently sent to Moscow on missions, and Basil Golítsyn, captivated by his manner and intelligence, made Mazeppa Hetman in 1687. He had the art to win the confidence of Peter also, who refused to believe any accusations against him until he actually went over to the camp of the enemy.

Rebellions among the Cossacks of the Ukraine were no new experience. When the Tsar Alexis attacked the Swedes and invaded Livonia in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Hetman Vygofsky raised the standard of revolt, but was reduced to submission in the peace of Kardis. Discontent was rife in these districts during the whole of Peter's reign. Although the Cossacks were incorporated with Russia, they were far from forming a united state. Their democratic spirit, strongest amongst the Zaporovians, was in direct contradiction with the official monarchy of the Tsars, which the Hetman, from the peculiarity of his position, was bound to support. Russian soldiers were not received in friendship by the inhabitants of the towns. There were many who favoured the cause of

Poland, some who would have wished for an alliance with the Khan of Crim-Tartary. This led to a condition closely resembling civil war, in which the authority of the Hetman could not make itself felt. It seemed often doubtful whether the possession of Little Russia could be maintained.

The position of Mazeppa was a very difficult one. Added to the circumstances above mentioned, the Little Russians were very reluctant to bear their share of the burden of the war. Besides, what would happen to them if Charles XII. proved the conqueror? It was most important for the Cossacks that they should not be on the side of the vanquished. It was natural that Mazeppa should place the interests of the Cossacks above all other interests, as Patkul had placed the interests of Livonia. In the clash of mighty forces he had to seek his own salvation. He made a serious miscalculation, but if events had turned out differently he might have been regarded as the saviour of his country. He was neither a hero nor a villain, but a man who had a part to play beyond his strength, and who played it badly. As before mentioned, accusations against his honour had been numerous, but Peter rejected them with characteristic magnanimity. There is no doubt that in the years 1689 to 1692 he had entered into secret relations with Poland, for Polish emissaries were active in Little Russia. Nor was he entirely free from blame with regard to the Khan of Crim-Tartary. At the same time, he generally supported the interests of the Tsar, and denounced anti-Russian intrigues to the Court of Moscow, representing himself perhaps as more uniformly loyal than he really was.

In the year 1705, when Mazeppa stood with his troops in the camp of Zamosc, he received a message from King Stanislaus Leczinski, making him all kinds of offers on the part of Charles XII. He arrested the messenger, put him to the torture, and sent the King's

letter to Peter, saying that this was the fourth time he had been subjected to similar temptations. John Sobiesky and the Khan of Crim-Tartary had both pressed him to renounce his allegiance to Moscow. The rebellious sectaries of the Don had used similar language, and he had now to listen to similar proposals from Charles and his phantom-king. He declared that he would always remain faithful to Peter. At the same time, he did not sever his connection with the malcontents of Little Russia, and explained to them that he would have been a fool to listen to the offers of Stanislaus. He corresponded in cipher with Princess Dolska, who was intriguing against Russia, and undoubtedly played a double part. He would have lost his influence with his countrymen had he been thought to be a stalwart supporter of Russian domination. In 1706 he communicated these intrigues to his master, and made new protestations of loyalty. But when the Princess played the trump card of assuring him that Menshikóf was a traitor, and was only scheming to be Hetman in his place, he lost his temper, and was in great difficulty as to how he ought to act.

In the meantime the discontent in Little Russia against the government of the Tsar was daily increasing. The fortification of Kíef, the constant demands of the recruiting officer, the growing taxes, aggressions on the autonomy of the country, were hard to bear. His ears were filled with complaints and murmurings of discontent. Some of his colonels besought him to free the Cossacks from the Russians, as Khmelnitzky had before freed them from Poland. Mazeppa kept these things to himself. He accompanied Peter in the campaign and sat in the council of war; but the hardest thing he had to endure was the overbearing predominance of Menshikóf. Thus when the Jesuit Galenski reached him with offers from Charles and Stanislaus, that he should join them against Peter, he

did not, as he had previously done, deliver up the messenger to Peter, but determined to await events.

On September 27th, 1707, Mazeppa received a letter from Princess Dolska, enclosing another from Stanislaus Leczinski. He was in great doubt what to do. Should he reveal everything to the Tsar, or should he accept the proposition? The night was spent in the torture of uncertainty, and in the effort to decide on his proper course. In the morning he took a solemn oath before Orlik, his devoted secretary, from whom we derive our knowledge of these events, sworn on a fragment of the true cross, that he would free Little Russia from Muscovite domination. Orlik said: "If the Swedes are victorious, then we shall all be happy; but if the Tsar conquers, we and all our people are lost." Mazeppa replied: "The egg wants to be cleverer than the hen! Do you suppose that I should be such a fool as to revolt from the Tsar until I was certain that he would be unable to save, not only the Ukraine, but his own empire, from the attack of the Swedes?" Mazeppa wrote to Stanislaus that he could not for the moment embark on any decisive line of conduct—that he was watched; but he promised to do nothing injurious to the interests of Sweden and Poland.

Mazeppa was now nearly ruined by another love intrigue. Kotschubey, the principal judge in Kíef, had two daughters, Anna, who was the widow of Mazeppa's nephew, and Matréná, who was Mazeppa's godchild. Mazeppa, now a widower, was anxious to marry Matréná, who was desperately in love with him; but such a marriage was against the laws of the Church, which regarded spiritual relationship as akin to natural relationship. Matréná kept up a correspondence with Mazeppa, who, knowing that the marriage was impossible, advised her to take the veil in a convent. Kotschubey, without reason, complained loudly of Mazeppa's conduct, who retaliated by bringing charges against him, and laying the blame of what had

happened on his wife. Kotschubey, enraged, determined on Mazeppa's destruction.

In September 1707 a monk appeared at Preobrazhensk, who declared, on the authority of Kotschubey, that Mazeppa was a traitor to the Tsar. When this produced no effect, Kotschubey sent another messenger in the beginning of 1708, in the person of a Colonel Iskra. He gave a circumstantial account of how Mazeppa desired either to kill the Tsar or to deliver him to his enemies, and to join his forces with those of Stanislaus Leczinski. The matter was inquired into, and Kotschubey supported his allegations in a lengthy document. Afterwards, when under torture, he admitted that the accusations were false, and were dictated by his desire for private revenge. Peter therefore sent Kotschubey and Iskra to Mazeppa, to do as he pleased with them; and on the morning of July 25th, 1708, they were beheaded, in the presence of the whole army of Cossacks and Little Russians, while their property was confiscated. It may have been that the specific allegations of Kotschubey were false; but there is no doubt that at this very time Mazeppa was engaged in treasonable correspondence with the Swedes.

What sealed the doom of Mazeppa was that at this time, the late summer of 1708, Charles XII. made his appearance in Little Russia. He thought that it would be easy to rouse this province in rebellion against the Tsar. General Lewenhaupt, then with Charles, issued a proclamation, in which he called upon all the inhabitants of the Ukraine to free themselves from an intolerable yoke. Mazeppa was deeply moved when he heard of the approach of the Swedish army. "The devil brings them here," he exclaimed. "Now the Russian army will in its turn penetrate into the centre of our country and our ruin will be complete." Peter sent exact instructions to Mazeppa. He was to allow no one to hold communication with the enemy. He

was to fall upon the rear of the Swedes with a body of Cossacks, and, if possible, take command of them himself. Mazeppa excused himself, on the ground that his gout prevented him from riding. It is said that he feigned illness, covered himself with plaster, and spent whole days in bed. Menshikóf now invited Mazeppa to a conference at head-quarters, but he replied that he was dangerously ill. It became necessary for him now to take one side or the other; the time for vacillation had passed. Mazeppa induced Orlik to write a letter in Latin to Count Piper, the chief minister of Charles XII., to say that he was delighted at the approach of the Swedes, that he trusted they would assist him to throw off the Russian yoke; at the same time he promised to prepare a ferry across the river Desna. This was in the autumn of 1708.

At the same time Mazeppa sent his nephew to Menshikóf to say that he was almost at the point of death, and was going from Batúrin to Borzna to receive extreme unction from the hands of the Bishop of Kíef. Menshikóf, who apparently was in real distress at the Hetman's illness, determined to set out to see him on his bed of sickness. Mazeppa was anxiously expecting the Swedes, who had arranged to arrive at the beginning of November. Instead of that a message reached him that Menshikóf was at hand. Mazeppa had no other resource but to escape to Batúrin. The next day he crossed the Desna and entered the Swedish camp. Here, together with those who accompanied him, he took an oath that he accepted the Swedish protection, not for any private advantage of his own, but for the good of his country and of the Cossack cause.

Menshikóf heard of Mazeppa's flight on the way to Borzna, so he turned aside to Batúrin and was refused admittance. He was then told that the Hetman had crossed the Desna, and lastly that he had gone over to the enemy. Peter received the news of Mazeppa's treachery on November 7th. He was greatly shocked,

for he had not expected anything of the kind. He issued proclamations to the inhabitants of Little Russia, to keep them in their allegiance. He wrote to Apráxin: "Mazeppa has turned out a new Judas, for, after being loyal to me for twenty-one years, now, when he is almost in his coffin, he has become a traitor and betrayer of his people." He adds, however, that he has few accomplices, and that the bulk of the Cossacks are loyal. Mazeppa, on his side, appealed to the principal commanders in the Ukraine, describing how the rights and privileges of the Little Russians had been trodden under foot by the Muscovite government. He praised Charles XII. in their presence, urged them to attack the Russian army and to prevent Batúrin from falling into their hands.

Menshikóf, however, acted with characteristic vigour. He invested Batúrin without delay, appearing before the town on November 11th. The garrison declared that they were faithful to the Tsar, but that they could not admit his troops until they had elected a new Hetman. When Menshikóf found that negotiations were of no avail, he ordered the assault; and in two hours the town was taken. No one was spared except the leaders, who were reserved for punishment. The whole town was levelled to the ground, and the stores which the Swedes were anxiously expecting were destroyed. Batúrin, the ancient stronghold of the Cossacks, ceased to exist, and is now nothing but a village. This put a stop to any danger of a rising, and entirely baffled the plans of Mazeppa. He had no other resource but to declare that he had entered the Swedish camp in the hope of negotiating a peace between Charles and Peter.

Peter acted with great decision and promptness. He met the Metropolitan of Kíef and the leaders of the Cossacks at Glúkhof, and, according to

established usage, elected Colonel Skoropadsky as new Hetman. On the same day, November 18th, Mazeppa was solemnly excommunicated and cursed. When this ceremony was repeated shortly afterwards at Moscow, his name was added to those of the false Dimitri, Sténka Rázin, and others, which are united in the comminatory service read in the Russian churches in the first week of Lent.

Mazeppa's treachery was not, however, at an end. In the last days of 1708 he made another attempt to join the Tsar. Daniel Apostal appeared in the Russian camp as an emissary of the former Hetman, promising to deliver Charles XII. and his principal generals into Peter's hands if the Tsar would promise him pardon and restoration to his rank. Peter seemed at first inclined to listen to these propositions, and began to negotiate with Apostal. Matters went so far that Golófkin wrote to Mazeppa with his own hand, assuring him of the fullest pardon and the prospect of rich rewards. But it happened that at the same time a correspondence was discovered between Mazeppa and Stanislaus Leczinski, which showed that he could not be trusted. Peter broke off the negotiations and published a number of documents which proved that Mazeppa was prepared to surrender the Ukraine into the hands of the Poles. Beginning, perhaps, as a patriot, he had learnt the grammar of treason, and was now not only defeated, but contemptible.

CHAPTER XXVI.

POLTÁVA.

THE winter which followed these events was exceptionally severe. It is said that on the plains of the Ukraine birds died on the wing. The snow lay on the ground from the beginning of October to the beginning of April. General Frost and General Famine fought against Charles with irresistible force. He had attained nothing from the desertion of Mazeppa. Instead of twenty thousand Cossacks he brought only fifteen hundred, which were afterwards joined by a small body of Zaporovians. The Swedes succeeded in crossing the Desna, and, by Mazeppa's advice, marched towards Rómny in the south. The Russians moved in a parallel direction. Charles was impatient to attack. Peter's object at present was to avoid a battle. He now aimed a blow at the Swedes by a clever stratagem. He marched against Gadiátch, occupied by a detachment of Swedes, as if to attack it. Charles broke up from Rómny, which was immediately occupied by the Russians.

On arriving at Gadiátch, Charles found the town deserted, and indeed, half burnt down, while his army had to encamp in the open fields, without shelter and without food. In this expedition three thousand Swedes were frozen to death. Charles avenged himself for this by the capture of Véprik, but it was effected with the loss of nearly as many men as were taken prisoners in the town. On the other hand, Menshikóf sailed

down the Dniéper and destroyed the island strongholds of the Zaporovian Cossacks. From this time their power was merely nominal, until they were finally destroyed by the Empress Catherine II. in 1775. During the winter the strength of Charles was gradually wasting away under the forces of nature which were opposed to him.

Peter was afraid lest the Turks should seize the opportunity to invade Russia. He therefore hastened to Vorónezh to look after his fleet. He worked all the winter in shipbuilding, which kept him in good spirits. In April, when the ice broke up, he sailed down the Don to Azof and Tagan-róg, where he celebrated Easter. The spring, on the other hand, only brought fresh troubles to Charles. The melting snow was, if possible, more deadly than the frost. The army which, after being reinforced by Lewenhaupt, had reached the number of forty-one thousand, was now reduced to twenty thousand, and of these two thousand were unserviceable. He had only thirty-four cannon left, and the powder had been spoilt by the damp. The Swedish army was confined to a small space between the Psiol, the Vórskla, and the Dniéper.

Charles was urged by his generals to recross the Dniéper, and either return to Poland or wait for reinforcements. The King, however, would not hear of this, and determined to besiege Poltáva, an important town situated on the Vórskla. During the winter the Russians had been fortifying it, and had increased its garrison to four thousand strong. Schuyler reports a conversation on this subject between Charles and his chief engineer, Gyllenbach, which is too long for our pages. The main point is that Gyllenbach objected, and Charles insisted. Charles despised the Russians, and the wary engineer urged every consideration of prudence with no result. Charles said to Piper: "Even if the good God should send down an angel from

heaven to tell me to give up Poltáva, I would still remain standing here."

The siege was begun on May 12th. Menshikóf hastened to the relief of the town. He wrote to his master that his presence was expected with impatience, and that until he arrived he was avoiding a general engagement. At the end of May the Tsar left Azof, and, after a hasty journey across the steppe, reached the scene of action on June 15th. Peter was now near the decisive moment which for years he had attempted to avoid. Nine years had passed since the battle of Narva. The Russians had learnt much; they had approached their goal step by step. The Tsar had matured, both in character and decision. His confidence in battle had been gradually increasing since the battle of Narva. Peter was quite aware of the important interests that were at stake.

But while the Russians were directed by the energy of a single will, the Swedish army was divided by the desire for war felt by the King, and the longing of the army for peace. The career of the two kings had been very different. Peter had devoted his best energies to laying the foundations of his empire, whereas Charles had become a stranger in his own country. Charles was undoubtedly a better general than Peter; but here the superiority came to an end. As a statesman, as ruler, and a man of matured wisdom, Peter was much better than his rival. The Russians proceeded with great caution. They did their best to relieve Poltáva without risking a general engagement. They determined to approach the place gradually, with a system of earthworks. They corresponded with the beleaguered town by shooting unloaded bombs across the river, filled with letters. At last they heard that the ammunition of the besieged was failing, that the Swedes were pressing forward, and that the fall of the fortress was imminent. Then, at last, it was determined in the Russian head-quarters to risk the result of a pitched

battle. The Russians crossed the river a few miles north of Poltáva, and took up a position in which they could not be attacked until they had strongly entrenched themselves.

News now reached the Russians that Charles was severely wounded. He had consulted Lewenhaupt as to what he should do, and he advised him to cross the Dniéper. Charles absolutely refused; and in the early morning of his birthday, June 28th, 1709, while riding along the banks of the Vórskla, in full view of the Russians, Lewenhaupt's horse was shot under him, and a bullet struck Charles's foot, piercing the whole length of the sole from heel to toe, and breaking some of the small bones. A fever followed, and it was found that the leg would have to be amputated. The Russians made preparations for the battle and the Swedes proceeded to anticipate them.

On the afternoon of July 7th, Rehnskjöld, who had the chief command in the absence of the King, called the generals together and told them that the attack was fixed for the following day; and at day-break on Thursday, July 8th, they stood before the Russian lines. They numbered only twelve thousand five hundred men, the Russians being four times as numerous. The battle began by an attack of the Swedes on the Russian cavalry, and the capture of two Russian redoubts. But the Swedes were everywhere outnumbered, and in two hours the fight was over. Charles, who was unable to walk or ride, was carried about in a litter. But the horses which bore the litter were shot down one by one, and the litter itself was broken to pieces. His bodyguard then carried him about on crowned poles; but he could do nothing to restore the victory. Peter was present in the battle on horseback, and was three times hit: one bullet passed through his hat, another through his saddle, and a third struck the cross which he wore round his neck.

The battle was over at noon. The principal Swedish commanders, Rehnskjöld, Schlippenbach, and others, were among the prisoners, who numbered as many as two thousand eight hundred. It is related, and there is no reason to doubt the fact, that Peter received his distinguished captives to dinner, paying special honour to Rehnskjöld. During the repast Piper made his appearance. Finding the battle lost and that there were no traces of the King, he had surrendered himself at Poltava. The Tsar now proposed a toast to his teachers in the military art. Rehnskjöld asked who the teachers were, and the Tsar replied, "Yourselves, *messieurs les Suédois*."

After the loss of the battle, Charles had returned to the camp, in order to rally what remained of the army. But a part of it had been taken by a sortie from Poltava, and Charles, having his horse shot under him, was in great danger. He now consented to get into a carriage, and asked after his friends Rehnskjöld, Piper, and the Prince of Wurtemberg. Being told that they were prisoners with the Russians, he exclaimed, "Better die with the Turks. Onward!" Charles, with the remainder of his army, then marched down the Vórskla, hoping to be able to cross the Dniéper at its mouth. In the morning they began to feel the pursuit of the Russians, who had remained inactive in the first excitement of victory.

It was not till the afternoon of July 11th that they reached the looked-for spot, and they then found that the ferry had been destroyed. There was nothing left for Charles but to leave his army behind him and to take measures for his personal safety. Boats and rafts having been procured with difficulty, Charles and Mazeppa crossed the Dniéper with about a thousand men, assisted by the Zaporovians. In crossing the Bug half his escort was captured, and he escaped with difficulty. Eventually he reached the

fortress of Bender on the Dniester. Mazeppa died at a village near Bender on March 31st, 1710, and was buried at Galatz. Charles remained the guest of Turkey for five years.

“Thus,” wrote Peter, “the army which, whilst it was encamped in Saxony, had inspired all Europe with terror, fell into the hands of the Russians at Poltáva; and on the Dniéper, no less than twelve hundred officers and seventeen thousand common soldiers were taken prisoners. It was one of the great capitulations of the world, comparable with Saratoga and Yorktown, with Pirna and Sedan.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PETER'S TRIUMPH.

THE effect of the battle of Poltáva can scarcely be exaggerated. Peter announced the victory to his friends with exuberant joy. To Catherine: "I declare to you that the all-merciful Lord has deigned to grant us this day an indescribable victory over the enemy. To sum it in one word, the enemy's whole force is 'knocked on the head.'" To Ramodanófsky: "Thus all the army of the enemy, by God's help, remains in our hands, and we congratulate your Majesty on a victory such as has never been heard of in this world." To Marlborough: "The whole of the Swedish army has had an end, like that of Phaeton." To Apráxin: "Now at last is the foundation stone of Petersburg, with God's help, securely laid." Rewards were distributed with no sparing hand. Menshikóf was made a field-marshal and presented with a magnificent service of plate; Sheremétief received large estates; Golófskin was made Chancellor, and Shafírof Vice-Chancellor. Peter, to his great joy, was advanced from the rank of colonel to that of Lieutenant-General in the army, and Vice-Admiral in the Fleet, and wrote a warm letter of thanks to Ramodanófsky on the occasion. Public tables were set up in the streets of Moscow, with meat, wine, and beer, like the *lectisternii* of the Romans, the town was illuminated, and salutes were fired, for a whole week, and during

the same period the bells were rung without intermission. To keep this up, women and girls were allowed to ring them, which was generally only permitted during Holy Week.

In Europe, the disgrace of Narva was wiped out, and Peter was the object of universal enthusiasm. Leibnitz, who had at one time expressed the wish that Charles XII. might reign in Moscow, and as far as the Amur, now wrote that the victory of Poltava would be for ever memorable in history, and would give a lesson to succeeding generations. He said that he had heard from eye-witnesses that the Russian troops had done wonders, and that there were no better soldiers in Europe. He added his opinion that the Tsar would now enjoy universal consideration, draw upon himself the attention of all men, and take a large share in the politics of the world. It was indeed generally recognised that the supreme power of the North, having passed from the hands of Poland to those of Sweden, had now been transferred to the Tsar of Muscovy.

Another judgment of Leibnitz is worth quoting : " It is the general remark that the Tsar will become a terror to the whole of Europe, and, as it were, a Turk of the North. But how are we to prevent him from civilising his subjects, from educating them and making them fit for war? 'He who acts within his own rights does wrong to no man.' For myself, as I have the advantages of the human race before my eyes, I am very glad that so great an empire enters upon the road of good service and order, and I see in the Tsar a person whom God has destined for high things. He has contrived to obtain good troops. I do not doubt that he will obtain favourable conditions from his foes, and I should be delighted to contribute in any way to his scheme for encouraging the sciences in his kingdom. I am of the opinion that he might do more in this

respect than all other princes have ever yet done." Leibnitz also corresponded with Peter's agent in Vienna, Baron Urbich, about the medals to be struck in commemoration of Poltava, and about the inscriptions which were to be engraved upon them.

Undoubtedly the victory of Poltava made it easier for Peter to continue his internal reforms. John Perry, in his account of cotemporary Russia, recorded his opinion that if Charles XII. had been the conqueror instead of Peter, the hatred felt against Peter in many parts of his empire would have burst into a flame, and that there would have been a general uprising, which would have been followed by a reaction. Voltaire, perhaps, had this idea in his mind when he said that the battle of Poltava is the only one in the history of the world which has created and not destroyed, which has advanced the well-being of humanity, and has opened to civilisation a large portion of the world which was previously closed to it.

Leibnitz had at this time a special interest in the fortunes of the Tsar, because negotiations had been going on for some time with the house of Wolfenbüttel with respect to the marriage of the Tsarévitch Alexis. In October 1707 Schleinitz, the minister of Duke Anton Ulrich, of Brunswick, had objected to the union of Peter's heir with Princess Charlotte of that house, because Peter's position in Russia was not secure, and because he would have great difficulty in gaining consideration in Europe. He said that Sweden would never consent to make peace until the new acquisitions of Russia in the Gulf of Finland had been reconquered, and that England and Holland, and even Poland, would never allow Russia to assume to herself the rank of a Sea Power. Peter had now won for himself that consideration which Schleinitz thought impossible. His praises were nowhere more loudly sung than in the Court of Wolfenbüttel, and the negotiations for the marriage were resumed. The Princess gave her con-

sent, the draft of the marriage contract was prepared, and Baron Urbich was sent to Russia to conclude the arrangements. At the same time the Elector of Hanover, the constant rival of his cousin of Brunswick, declared his readiness to surrender the alliance with Sweden and to make approaches to Russia. We find also that Peter's envoys occupied a very different position in the Courts of Europe to that which had previously been the case.

After leaving Poltava Peter went to Kíef, and then proceeded to Poland. Here he was met by Vitzthum, the minister of king Augustus II., who presented his congratulations and invited him to a conference with his master at Thorn. Shortly afterwards he received an emissary from Frederick I. King of Prussia, who was also anxious to pay his court to the rising sun. Stopping only for a day at Warsaw, he received the homage of the Polish magnates. They thanked him for having been the saviour of Poland, and accepted quietly the deposition of Stanislaus, and the restoration of Augustus. Stanislaus joined Charles at Bender. More than twenty years afterwards he was made Duke of Lorraine, and died there at an advanced age. The treaty between the Tsar and the King was concluded on October 20th, 1709. It concluded a new alliance between Poland and Russia, and confined Sweden to her natural boundaries. Those who had been responsible for the catastrophe of Patkul were to be brought to trial. A few days afterwards a second article was added, which secured to Augustus, as Elector of Saxony, and his heirs, the possession of the Grand Duchy of Livonia.

As in the case of Napoleon, a hundred years later, the sovereigns of the North vied with each other in seeking Peter's favour. Whilst he was at Thorn, Rantzau appeared as Danish Ambassador, to congratulate Peter and to offer him an offensive and defensive alliance against Sweden. The King of

Denmark had previously expressed to Dolgorúky his joy at what had happened, and his opinion that the Tsar, by the victory of Poltáva, had acquired boundless glory for himself and his people, and had proved to the world that the Russians had learned how to make war. Indeed, immediately after the battle of Poltáva the Danes had begun to arm, and troops and subsidies had been promised to them by Russia. Now it was possible to pay in different coin. The credit attaching to a Russian alliance made it possible to bring it about with a more modest expenditure.

At the same time these events were looked upon with different eyes by the Maritime Powers who were engaged in the deadly struggle with Louis XIV. We have more than once had occasion to point out what pains had been taken by the allies, during the whole course of this conflict, to prevent complications in the North, which might either withdraw troops from the common cause, or throw any one of those engaged in it into the arms of France. Marlborough wrote to Godolphin that the contingent supplied from the dominions of the "three kings" of Poland, Prussia, and Denmark amounted to forty thousand men, that Brunswick and Holstein gave twenty thousand more, and that the loss of these would be a great advantage to France. On the other hand, Louis XIV. was naturally desirous to make an alliance with Russia. Dolgorúky advised the Tsar not to enter into any hasty engagement, but to hold out hopes of a French alliance so that Louis might be encouraged to continue the war of the Spanish Succession and to hold England and Holland in check. The policy of Peter was to keep the rest of Europe occupied, in order that attention might be diverted from the prosecution of his own plans for the aggrandisement of his country. The secretary of the French Embassy in Denmark expressly assured Dolgorúky that the King of France was quite ready to guarantee the new acquisitions of Peter in the Gulf of Finland, and

to assist him in obtaining a firm footing in the Baltic, in order to diminish the influence of the Maritime Powers in that sea.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, Dolgorúky succeeded in concluding an alliance with Denmark without promising either troops or subsidies. Dolgorúky wrote in triumphant strain: "I have not engaged to give either a soldier or a shilling." The treaty was signed on October 22nd, and provided that the King of Denmark should attack France, and also invade Sweden from the side of Norway, whilst Peter should press forward in Finland.

It now remained for him to meet King Frederick of Prussia. The interview took place at Marienwerder on the Vistula. Its tone was hearty and friendly, but Frederick did not obtain what he wanted. He pressed Peter to agree to a partition of Poland, but the Tsar said that it was not practicable. There was a good deal of embracing, and Peter presented the King with a sword of considerable value. But Peter had risen to the height of the situation. Frederick and his ministers were surprised at his dignified and independent bearing. Thus a great nature shows itself when it has obtained a position in which it can exhibit its native qualities. As it was now with Peter, so was it in the following century with Napoleon. A defensive alliance, however, between Peter and Frederick I., was concluded at Marienwerder on November 1st, 1708. Besides securing the union of the four Powers against possible aggression on the side of Sweden, it agreed that Elbing and the adjoining district should pass to Prussia if the King should prevent the Swedes from invading Poland from the side of Pomerania. Peter also agreed to restore the Duchy of Curland to Frederick William, the nephew of the king of Prussia, and to give him in marriage Anna, the daughter of his brother Iván, who at a later period became Empress.

On his way back to Russia Peter stayed a short time at Riga, which Sheremétief was now investing with a besieging army. He opened the bombardment of the town on November 25th, and fired the first three bombs with his own hand. In writing an account of this to Menshikóf, "the child of his heart," he added, "I thank God that He has allowed me to avenge myself on this accursed town." The Tsar then proceeded to St. Petersburg, the "Holy Land," as he called it, and laid the foundation of the Church of St. Samson, on whose day the battle of Poltáva had been fought, especially intended for the burial of strangers. He also laid the keel of a ship to be called *Poltáva*. He entered Moscow in triumph on January 1st, 1710. Seven triumphal arches decked the streets, with all kinds of ornaments, emblems, and inscriptions. The ignorance of the people was duly considered by providing explanations to the allegories. Peter was represented as Phœbus, the Lion, and the Crab, signs of the Zodiac which were symbolical of the attack of the Swedes and their subsequent flight. Charles may have been supposed to have come in like one and to have gone out like the other. Themis and her scales represented the justice of Peter's rule. Other pictures figured forth the old capital, over which floated a presentment of the Tsarévitch Alexis, and a maze or labyrinth, which was supposed to typify the tortuous ways and the cunning contrivances of his Swedish rival. Peter's progress was accompanied by a body of Swedish prisoners, to the number of twenty-two thousand and eighty-five.

At the same time Peter, as we have already seen, was very anxious not to take credit which did not belong to him. At the solemn reception in the palace, Ramodanófsky, now promoted from king to *Kaiser*, sat on the throne, while Sheremétief and Menshikóf, attended by Peter, gave an account of the victories they had won and of the prisoners they had taken.

The credit of the battle of Poltáva was given to Sheremétief, and that of the surrender of the Swedish army to Menshikóf. Peter only claimed for himself the victory of Liésna over Lewenhaupt in 1708. Piper and Rehnskjöld could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw a stranger on the throne. One of the walls of the room then opened, and showed the hall of the new palace, brilliantly lighted, and prepared for a banquet. The table of honour was laid for five persons. Ramodanófsky presided, and was attended by the two field-m Marshalls, the Tsar, and the Chancellor Golófskin. The Swedes were seated separately on the right. The crowd outside were amused with fireworks, and the Swedish prisoners were entertained with the soldiers who had captured them. Thus had Charles XII. fallen, like Phaeton, from heaven, and Peter, in the long passage from Narva to Poltáva, had come considerably nearer to the goal of his desires. The beginning, the hardest part of every undertaking, was now over, and Peter was in a fair way to fulfil the expectation of Leibnitz, that he would play a great part in the general affairs of Europe.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REFORM AND REACTION.

THE battle of Poltáva and its immediate results offer a convenient resting place in considering the external relations of the Russian Empire. We must now retrace our steps and turn our attention to the internal affairs of the kingdom, to the efforts which Peter made to bring his people into line with the rest of Europe, and to the discontent of which these efforts were the cause. We have already related the first measures taken by Peter after his return from his foreign travels ; we must now supplement these statements, using Schuyler as a guide. In October 1702 a new institution, which Schuyler says has left an impress on Russian life not yet effaced, came into being, the Secret Chancery of Preobrazhénsk. It began as a mere measure of police, and developed into an important part of the administration, comparable to the Star Chamber in England. In old times the Streltsi at Moscow, like their namesakes, the Bowmen, at Athens, were charged with the preservation of public order. After their destruction these duties devolved on the Preobrazhénsky regiment, and drunkards and other disturbers of the peace were arrested and taken either to the guard-house at the Kremlin, or to the head-quarters at Preobrazhénsk. At this time the words "word and deed of the Tsar" were the regular formula for denouncing high-treason, and any one charged in this manner was arrested and tortured. The Secret

Chancery was afterwards removed to St. Petersburg, and was the ancestor of the third section of the Imperial Chancery, which was exclusively charged with the secret police.

At the end of 1708 Peter divided the whole empire into eight *gubernias*, or governments, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kíef, Smolénsk, Archangel, Kazán, Azof, and Siberia. Menshikóf was made Governor of St. Petersburg, and at the head of the other governments were placed men bearing the honoured names, Golítsyn, Soltykóf, and Apráxin. One of their most important duties was to see that the revenue was properly collected and sent to the Treasury, and from their reports the first balance-sheet was constructed in 1710. It was by no means easy to raise a revenue. Almost everything was taxed, and the forced labour imposed upon the tenants was a very heavy burden. We need not go into fiscal details, but it is interesting to note other regulations of the same period which throw light on the social condition of the people. It was forbidden to kill new-born infants who were deformed or idiots. The sale of poisonous herbs and drugs, except by apothecaries, was prohibited. The sale or wearing of sharp-pointed knives was forbidden. Laws were made to protect Moscow against fire, and the parish priests were obliged to keep registers of births and deaths.

A culminating act was the edict, already mentioned, of April 27th, 1702, inviting foreigners to Russia, issued on the advice of Patkul, the main point of which was to secure freedom of religious worship to persons of all denominations. A school of mathematics and navigation was established at Moscow under the charge of three Scotch professors; and a similar school for teaching ancient and modern languages was established by Pastor Gluck, of Marienburg, the former guardian of the Empress Catherine. Manuals, educational books, and translations, began to be printed at Moscow under

Peter's personal supervision, and in 1703 the first Russian newspaper was published. Also a public theatre was opened in the Kremlin, a great departure from ancient usage.

We have already mentioned some of the ecclesiastical changes which followed on the death of the Patriarch Adrian. Besides these the "Department of Monasteries," a kind of Ecclesiastical Commission, took possession of, and managed, all the monastic property, which was very considerable. This led to a large portion of the revenues being confiscated, and after 1705 they were treated with very great strictness. Their allowance of grain was reduced, their servants were dismissed, the monks were bound to reside in the monasteries, and no novices were to be received under forty years old.

Such had been the main reforms up to the time of the battle of Poltava. But a year and a half afterwards, on March 6th, 1711, a decree was issued which made an important change in the government, by creating a Senate to govern the country in the absence of the Tsar. It was composed of nine members, of which Count Músin Púshkin was the head, and every official, civil or military, clerical or lay, was bound to obey its orders under penalty of severe punishment, even of death. Among their duties were to ensure justice in the tribunals, to watch over the expenditure of the Government, and to collect as large a revenue as possible ; and to carry these objects into effect a number of "fiscal agents" were created, who were really nothing better than spies and informers, who received half the penalty as the reward of detection. Even the governors, including Menshikóf himself, had to obey the orders of the Senate. Such was the machine of administration, and we cannot be surprised if Peter sometimes complained of the slowness with which it worked.

All the changes which we have narrated produced

discontent in different sections of Russian society; but probably the strongest feeling was amongst the clergy, and especially the monks, who inscribed piety and orthodoxy on their banners, and regarded Peter as a heretic, or as the Child of Hell. The cutting off the beards, the change of clothing, the smoking of tobacco, all had their effect, and the predominance of the clerical element in these disturbances is shown by the records of criminal trials. The innovations were regarded as a violation of the ordinances of religion, and there arose a number of fanatics who were determined either to seek safety in flight, or to take measures of open resistance, or to commit suicide by burning. The Tsar was assailed with every kind of abuse. He was proved to be Antichrist, and the double-headed eagle, which was now adopted as the Russian ensign, was regarded as the natural mark of an anti-Christian power, because it had no counterpart in nature. It was said that he was of hellish birth, that he kept none of the regular fasts, that his mother was a woman of bad character. The nervous twitchings to which Peter was prone were looked upon as the signs of diabolical possession. They declared that he had executed the Streltsi because they were true Christians, whereas they had plenty of proof that Peter was a heretic. The regular soldiers, which Peter had got together, were heretics, because they did not observe the fasts of the Church. Peter was accused of having murdered his brother Iván because he was a true Christian ruler. Many Russians had become nothing better than foreigners, who shaved themselves and wore perukes. Menshikóf was held in honour by the Tsar because he had fallen from Christ, and was a child of the devil; wherever he went he was surrounded by a crowd of bad spirits, who watched over him. "What a difference," said a woman of the people, "between the late Tsar and the present! The one used to be always making pilgrimages to monas-

teries, the other is continually journeying to the German suburb." A man who had been compelled to adopt the new clothing expressed the wish that he might see those who had introduced it hanging on the gallows.

These murmurings were swelled by complaints about the taxation of churches and monasteries. It was rumoured that Peter, instead of conquering the Swedes, intended to desert his own country. Some of the more excited wandered as missionaries amongst the people, stirring up popular discontent. One of these was Anika Popóf, who preached against the heavy taxation, called Peter Antichrist, and complained that he was not the son of his father's first marriage, which alone was regular, but was illegitimate and a usurper. Many ascribed the wearing of wigs, and other heathenish customs, to the influence of Anna Mons, who had bewitched the Tsar and put the proceeds of the beard-tax in her pocket. These malcontents began to look towards the Tsarévitch Alexis as the restorer of the old state of things. It was reported, and believed, that the young prince was surrounded by a number of companions like-minded with himself, and even by representatives of the Cossacks, whose power Peter had attempted to undermine. They even went so far as to say that he went about the capital with a Cossack guard, and that when they met a *boyar* whom they did not like, they seized him, at a signal given by Alexis, bound him hand and foot, and cast him into a pit. "We have no Tsar," they cried; "he who now rules is no Tsar—even the Tsarévitch admits that Peter is neither his father nor the Tsar." At a later period, when Peter issued a law of succession which seemed to attack the right of his grandson Peter, the son of the unfortunate Alexis, the people declared that Peter's real design was to leave the empire to the Swedes after his death. Catherine was regarded as a Swede by birth, and her daughters were looked upon as foreigners.

We can readily understand that discontent did not confine itself to words alone, but found expression in deeds. The new taxes were openly resisted ; the workmen engaged either in ship-building at Vorónezh, or on the edifices of the new capital, were exposed to a very heavy rate of mortality, and their despair led to revolts which were put down with extreme severity. The sacrifices demanded by the Northern war were very severe. Recruits were collected by press-gangs, who acted with the greatest brutality. Many of them died from hunger ; they were led from their dwellings in chains, and on the march were detained, for security, in crowded and unhealthy prisons. The Government began to be regarded as a hostile power, the creation of the Spirit of Evil, as the natural work of the great Antichrist who was at its head. Desertions were so frequent that the new recruits were branded on the left hand with a little cross ; and the people were accustomed to point out this sign as the "Seal of Antichrist."

Thus on all sides was there unrest and discontent, disorder and fermentation of spirits, which resulted in conspiracies, attempts at murder, risings, and rebellions. These were all due to a state of transition organised from above with despotic authority, and inaugurated by a sovereign who in his principles and his views was entirely opposed to the most cherished convictions of his people. These dark murmurings were further intensified by the cruel severity of the criminal justice of those times, which made itself felt in every department and statum of the national life. Thus both sides became gradually accustomed to violence. Revolutions from above called forth rebellions from below ; force on the side of government could only be met by an exhibition of equal force by the discontented.

Instead of being surprised at this, we may rather wonder that the reaction was not more severe, and

that the more serious risings of Cossacks, peasants, and nomad peoples, were principally confined to the south-eastern provinces of the empire. Still less can we be astonished if many cotemporary observers, looking at these disturbances, and the widespread discontent from which they sprang, began to doubt as to the permanence of Peter's system and the stability of his government. When the negotiations for the marriage of Alexis with a princess of the house of Brunswick were resumed in 1707, a prominent statesman of that country expressed his opinion that the position of the Tsar was not secure enough for an alliance, not only on account of the constant revolutions in Russia, but also because of the reforming zeal of the Tsar which must be considered as their cause.

As the Russian Government attempted to enforce its orders with a stronger hand, the natural resource of the oppressed was in flight to the frontiers of the kingdom. There they had a better chance of resisting the power which in the centre of the kingdom was too strong for them. We must not, therefore, be surprised to find the most serious risings, not in the capital of the empire, but on its extreme confines towards the south-east.



PETER.

From the painting by Renner.

CHAPTER XXIX.

REBELLION IN THE SOUTH-EAST.

WE have already explained the origin of the Cossacks, and shown that they did not form a separate race or nationality, but were gradually recruited from wild and unruly spirits, who, from some reason or other, could not give contented adhesion to the requirements of governments or of civilisation. They were bands of cityless men, of outlaws, driven from the pale by various forces. The serf who wished to escape from his lord, the tradesman who disliked customs duties, the citizen who rebelled against taxes—all contributed to swell this huge Cave of Adullam, like its prototype, except that it had no leader. Political changes, the season of interregnum, the progress of religious dissent, swelled the numbers of these free lances, half withdrawing themselves from society, half rejected by it. The Cossacks which girdled the empire at various parts of its frontier were like the meteoric dust which has not been used in the making of a world. They afforded a ready material for adventurers of all kinds—for Bolótnikof, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, for Sténka Rázin in the reign of Alexis, for Pugatschef in the reign of Catherine II.

But the rebellious elements were not confined to the discontented subjects of the Tsar. The nomad races who were not of Russian blood were deeply penetrated with the Cossack spirit. Tartars, Bashkirs, Mordvins

and Calmucks, swelled the forces, both of Sténka Rázin and of Pugatschef. Even the Streltsi had not disdained sometimes to make common cause with the outlaws. Many of them, after the catastrophe which put an end to their organisation, had fled to the Don and its tributaries, to the Volga and the Ural Mountains. The disturbances which now demand our attention are divisible into three groups, the rebellion in Astrakhan in 1705 and 1706, the rising of the Cossacks of the Don under Bulavín, and the mutiny of the non-Russian peoples against the government of the Tsar, especially that of the Bashkirs. All these disturbances took place in the south-east. In each case the victory remained with the Government. But the danger was not at an end. The Tsar succeeded by division. If all these elements of hostility could have combined in time and place, the success of the Tsar might have been doubtful. In fact he was able to deal with one after the other. Let us go back to the first symptoms of disorder in the year 1700.

As early as the year 1700 rumours were rife that large bands of robbers were being formed in the plains of the Don. Their leader was a fugitive heretic, a *raskolnik*. They extended on one side to the confines of Persia, on the other to the district of the Volga, and in another direction as far as Tsarítsin and Astrakhan. The head-quarters of the rebels were on the River Medvjéditsa, a tributary of the Don. These were Cossacks and sectaries combined, but all equally hostile to the Government.

In August 1701 the arrest of certain Cossacks of the Don was ordered for having given utterance to the following treasonous statements: "The Tsar Iván Alexévitch is still alive. He is gone to Jerusalem, and lies concealed there because the *boyars* planned all kind of plots against him. The Tsar Peter loves the *boyars*, the Tzar Iván loves the people. The Tsar Peter is Antichrist, and is not the son of Alexis, but

the son of Lefort. Azof will not remain long in the hands of the Tsar ; the Don Cossacks will deliver the frontier to the Turks, and will themselves become subjects of the Sultan. The Don must also become Turkish. As for the Tsar, it will be easy to seize him when he comes to Vorónezh and make him over to the Sultan." These disturbances did not produce any effect, and things remained tolerably quiet until a mutiny broke out in Astrakhan in 1705.

The ringleaders of this revolt were merchants from Yarosláv, Moscow, Nízhni-Nóvgorod, Pavlóf and Uglitch, besides those who came from Astrakhan itself. This shows that the movement did not have a local character, but was an expression of the general discontent against Peter in the empire. Astrakhan, however, had been, as before indicated, a place of refuge for discontented people of all kinds. Amongst others, the sons of the Streltsi, executed in 1698 and 1699, had come here, and they spread abroad all kinds of stories about Peter. They grumbled, not only over the fate of the Streltsi, but over the new dress, and the new taxes. They also believed, or affected to do so, that Peter was not a genuine son of Alexis, and that he was Antichrist.

One Stepan of Moscow, two of whose uncles had been executed among the Streltsi, happened to be at Kolómna, an important town on the Moskvá, on his way to Astrakhan, where he met a relation who said to him : "You would do a good work if you would stir up the people in Astrakhan: the population of the Don and the Ural would then rise as well. Who could resist you? The Tsar is fighting in Sweden, the towns are empty, the scanty garrisons left in them are ready for revolt, and will be delighted to assist you. This is an unequalled opportunity for restoring the ancient faith." Stepan received at the same time a writing which asserted that four *boyars* were governing in Moscow, and that they intended to divide the empire

into four parts. He was instructed to distribute this writing as well as he could, so soon as the rebellion should break out. Stepan reached Astrakhan in 1705, and quietly spread the information he had received about the state of things in Moscow. His words fell upon fruitful soil.

Just at this time news came to Astrakhan that Peter was dead. The officials were at their wits' end, especially the Voievode Rzhéfsky, who, like others of his class, was believed to have abandoned Christianity. No other reason could they assign for the beard-cutting and the new clothes. A sacristan spoke to the crowd which had assembled that they must risk their lives in matters which concerned the holy faith. Also a tax-gatherer, whose duty it was to collect the fines from those who wished to preserve their ancient clothing, positively refused to do so any longer. He also said that he would rather die than suffer his beard to be removed. He was, naturally, thrown into prison.

At the end of July a report gained credence in the market place of Astrakhan that Peter had forbidden all Russians to marry for seven years, and that all Russian girls, who were of marriageable age, were to be united with foreigners, whose arrival was daily expected from Kazán. The excitement at the receipt of this news was indescribable. The inhabitants determined to be beforehand with the plans of the Government, and to anticipate the arrival of the hated "Germans" by marrying their daughters as quickly as they could to Russian husbands. On Sunday, August 9th, there was a colossal marriage ceremony. No less than a hundred pairs were united in matrimony. The eating and drinking which was the natural accompaniment of these weddings excited the populace to fever pitch. On that very night there were serious disturbances. The Government offices were stormed, their treasuries plundered. Several officers, amongst whom were some foreigners, were murdered. Strict

search was made for the hated Voievode Rzhéfsky, whose avarice and cruelty had done much to alienate the people. The next day he was discovered and killed. The wheels of government were stopped, a kind of Cossack republic was erected. James Nósof, a merchant from Yarosláv, was elected Hetman, and a *raskolnik*, or heretic, was made his deputy. It is only fair to say that those who engaged in these proceedings believed that Peter was no longer alive.

The news of this revolt caused great excitement in Moscow. It was feared that something of the kind might take place in the capital. Pleyer, the Austrian agent in Moscow, who is a valuable authority for this period of Peter's life, tells us that the rebellion was due, not merely, nor indeed chiefly, to religious fanaticism, but to the fact that the material interests of the population had been seriously affected by the imposition of new taxes. The Bashkirs had suffered in this manner. There had been an especially oppressive tax on salt, which affected the fish industry, also taxes on stoves and baths, tolls on passing bridges, and a heavy beard-tax. If some of the grievances of these insurgents were founded on logic and reason, others were extremely irrational. When Peter attempted to discover why his officials were accused of worshipping idols, and what idols they were supposed to worship, he found that the people imagined that the wig-blocks, which had recently made their appearance, were used for this purpose. Also the Tsar himself was supposed to pay reverence to a special he-god named Janus, because he had ordered that the year should begin on the first of January.

Fortunately for the Russian Government the Cossacks were divided in opinion as to the expediency of joining the movement. The news of what had happened at Astrakhan at first caused a great excitement on the banks of the Térek. An officer was killed by the mob. But in answer to the appeal of the

Astrakhan Provisional Government they replied : " We are certainly ready to rise in support of the Christian religion, and against beard-cutting, German clothes, and tobacco, and generally to defend the Church ; but we cannot send any troops. We are few in numbers, and we if we march to your assistance the Tartars may inflict injury on our wives and children." The Cossacks on the Yana sent a more favourable answer, but those of the Don refused to help. It is probable that Apráxin, who was at Vorónezh, took measures to calm them. They had also less reason, because they had not been affected by the clothes reform. They declared expressly that in that matter they had suffered no wrong, and that there was not a single tailor amongst them who knew how to make the German dress.

The first question was how to put down the rebellion. Pleyer reports on September 23rd, 1705, that several thousand Cossacks had been despatched to Astrakhan for this purpose. It was also reported in the capital that Ayuka, Prince of the Calmucks, had defeated the insurgents in a battle with twelve thousand of his men. Peter was at Mitau when he heard of the disturbances. His first anxiety was for the peace of the capital. He ordered the Government chest to be removed from Moscow, and either to be burned or buried. Also he advised that all arms should be removed from the city, and that the foreign post between Moscow and distant countries should be suspended. Then, although he was in great need of regular troops for the Swedish war, he determined to send Sheremétief to the scene of disorder. Peter urged on his march with great energy ; he begged the field-marshal not to delay, but to get to Kazán as quickly as he could, according to promise. Shortly afterwards better news arrived, and the Tsar was able to write to Apráxin : " I perceive from your letter that the most merciful God will not pour out over us all the vial of His wrath, and that He will not give

to these dogs, who have for five-and-twenty years been conspiring mischief, the will to carry out their designs." He was so anxious to probe the matter to the bottom that he ordered any insurgents who might be taken prisoners to be sent to him at Grodno.

Peter also made trial of measures of conciliation. He sent a citizen of Astrakhan, by name Kisélnikof, to promise grace and pardon to the rebels if they would only surrender the ringleaders of the revolt. Kisélnikof reached Astrakhan at the beginning of January. Peter's offer had some effect. It was determined to send deputies to Moscow to state their grievances. We know most of them, but some new details were added—for instance, that in the beard-cutting, people had often been wounded in the face. There were also a number of specific complaints against the Voievode. He had deprived the soldiers of the garrison of some of their pay; he had taxed chimneys, and the sharpening of knives and axes; he had punished the wives and children of soldiers who were engaged in the Swedish war for the non-payment of taxes. They complained also that he had enriched himself by every kind of intrigue and trickery; that he exposed the lives of soldiers by making them serve in winter; that he had laid unjust contributions on private individuals. Finally, they said that the German officers had compelled their soldiers to eat flesh on fast-days, and had insulted the wives and daughters of Russians, and that Swedish prisoners had been entrusted with important posts, and allowed to oppress the Russians.

The representations of the deputies made a deep impression in Moscow. Golovín wrote to the Tsar that they were honourable people, and that it was best to exercise clemency and declare an amnesty, as the fault was by no means on one side. King Augustus appears, also, to have interceded for the Astrakhanese, and Peter seemed inclined to take the same view.

The deputies were presented with fifty rubles each before they began their journey home. It seemed that order was in a fair way of being entirely restored. In the meantime Sheremétief was proceeding slowly towards Kazán. It was necessary to appoint a new Voievode in place of the murdered Rzhéfski ; and the ringleaders were understood to be excluded from the promised amnesty. Peter gave instructions that the taxes were to be exacted with as little violence to the feelings of the people as possible. He wrote to Sheremétief that he was to proceed with every possible leniency, and to avoid, as far as might be, the shedding of blood.

The hopes of a peaceful solution proved to be vain. There were two parties in Astrakhan ; one, led by the priests, was in favour of conciliation ; the other cherished plans of revolution, and looked forward to open war. The Metropolitan of Astrakhan and other leading clergy kept up a constant correspondence with Sheremétief, who was advancing with a slowness which excited the wrath of Peter. The representatives of the clergy and the citizens of Astrakhan met Sheremétief some miles from his destination. They welcomed his arrival, but nothing final could be settled without the concurrence of the municipal authorities. To confer with them Sheremétief despatched one Borodúlin to the town, where he met the leaders of the revolt in the house of Nósof. He found them full of enmity to the Government. They insulted Peter, declaring that he was dead in body and soul, and that they were prepared to fight for the truth of the Christian religion. When Borodúlin, during the conference, proposed to drink to the health of the Tsar, they refused to do so, accusing him of impiety and of having changed the orthodox creed into a Roman one. The old calumnies were repeated, and other emissaries sent by Sheremétief had to listen to the same abuse. And Nósof declared that he and

his followers intended to march upon Moscow in the spring.

Sheremétief was encamped with his small army on an island in the Volga, some little distance from Astrakhan, when three of the most important citizens came out and told him that the rebels had made up their minds to dare the worst. He immediately marched, and, when about a mile from the town, he sent a summons demanding surrender. The rebels answered by attacking him, and a battle took place which reminds us of the battle with the mutinous Streltsi in 1698. They were speedily driven back, and for a while made a stand in the Kremlin. From this they were driven by artillery. Then the ring-leaders appeared and begged for pardon, carrying with them an axe and a headsman's block. When Sheremétief entered the town he found the population in thousands lying on either side of the road, entreating for mercy.

The victory was cheaply purchased. Of Sheremétief's army only twenty were killed and fifty-three wounded. It is not known how many of the insurgents fell. But the result was tragical enough. Hundreds of criminals were sent to Moscow, and no less than three hundred and sixty-five persons were either put to death, some being broken on the wheel, or died during their tortures and imprisonment. No tortures, however, were able to justify the charge of complicity with Moscow. Astrakhan was taken by Sheremétief on March 23rd, 1706, but the executions lasted for nearly two years. On February 19th, 1708, seventy rebels were beheaded, five broken on the wheel, and forty-five hanged. Sheremétief was handsomely rewarded for his success. Peter, writing on the subject to his ministers, boasted that three thousand soldiers had vanquished ten thousand rebels. The victory was celebrated by a banquet in Menshikóf's house at St. Petersburg, while the owner, who was then at Kíef, wrote to his

master that he exhibited his joy by the firing of cannon and muskets.

The severities which punished the revolt of Astrakhan may be, perhaps, explained by the fact that two other rebellions immediately succeeded it, those of the Bashkirs and the Cossacks of the Don. The first of these was due to the intrigues of a certain Bashkir, who assumed the title of Sultan, and made several journeys to Constantinople and to the Crimea in order to establish alliances for the overthrow of the Russian Government. He also tampered with the mountain tribes dwelling on the north of the Caucasus, and in the beginning of 1708 captured several forts on the river Térek. He was taken prisoner in an engagement with a detachment of Russian troops which had been sent against him by Apráxin from Astrakhan. His capture was the signal for a wider rising, which was put down with difficulty. The insurgents marched upon Kazán. Eventually means were found for stirring up the Calmucks and the Bashkirs against each other, and in their feuds and combats the Russian Empire found peace. English, Russians, Romans—indeed, all who have to govern a wide-extended dominion—must learn the virtue of the maxim “Divide and rule.”

Far more important was the rising of the Cossacks of the Don. We have already seen by what means the Cossacks were formed and recruited. It was imperative for the Government to put a stop to this desertion of honest labour, and the swelling of the ranks of outlaws. Peter had rewarded the Don Cossacks for not having taken part in the rebellion of Astrakhan, but he was bound to set limits to the increase of their forces. When other means failed, he sent Dolgorúky into that region, with a body of soldiers, to do what the Hetman had so often promised and never performed, to seize and bring back by force deserters and fugitive peasants. It was natural that such an attack upon the Alsatian

privileges of the Cossacks should be resisted. Sympathy began to be expressed with the insurgents of Astrakhan and one, Kondráty Bulávin, a local Hetman, was found to place himself at the head of the malcontents. He was the hero of the rebellion. He succeeded in attacking the force of Dolgorúky on the River Aidar, and killed the Russians to the last man. This was on October 20th, 1707.

The Cossacks were not unanimous in their revolt. There were some who remembered the days of Sténka Rázin, and who compared Bulávin to that hero. Others attacked the insurgents, took them prisoners, cut off their noses, hung them up by the feet, and asked for reward from the Tsar for their fidelity. Peter thought that everything was over, and Bulávin had for a short time to go into hiding amongst the Zaporovians. But he soon re-appeared with a larger host, and invited all to join him who cared for a merry robber life, with plenty to eat and drink, for riding on fine horses, and rich plunder. He said that the poor, the peasants, and the criminals in prisons were the natural allies of the Cossacks, also they might depend upon the assistance of the Zaporovians and others. He tried to seduce the workmen who were felling timber for the fleet at Azof. The disorder gradually spread, and the cities of Tambóf, Koflóf, and Túla, trembled for their safety. Bulávin threatened to cut off the Russians from Azof, and in the last resort to transfer the allegiance of the Cossacks from the Tsar to the Sultan. He even wrote to the Sultan under date June 6th, 1708, to make him this definite offer.

It is not certain how far Peter was acquainted with what had occurred; he had, however, heard enough to induce him to take severe measures. He wrote, on April 23rd, to the brother of the murdered Dolgorúky to march against the insurgents at once, and to put an end to their existence with fire and sword. The villages of the rebels must be burned, their inhabitants

cut down, the ringleaders broken on the wheel, so that waverers might be deterred from joining them. Severity, he said, was the only treatment fit for these grasshoppers. Dolgorúky was quite ready to meet the Tsar more than half way, and to avenge his brother's death. Peter's anxiety was not confined to putting down a dangerous revolt, but extended to the safety of the places which they might attack. Measures were taken for the fortification of Azof and Tagan-róg. If these places were secure, all serious danger was at an end. He thought seriously of going to the Don himself, and of taking command in person; but he could not do so until the Swedish war was at an end.

In the meantime the power of Bulávin was increasing every day. He had occupied the important town of Tcherkásk, and the richer he became, the more followers he attracted. Those who refused to join him he put to death. Peter's anxiety became intolerable. He determined to leave the Swedish war, if only for three months. At last the rebels were forced to an action with the regular troops, and were defeated. Dolgorúky was desirous to hang, quarter, and impale a hundred and forty-three prisoners; but he awaited instructions from the Tsar, that he might not seem to be inspired by personal vengeance.

Bulávin had committed the fault of dividing his forces. If he had kept them together he might have joined the Bashkirs, whom he would have found ready for revolt, or have even gone to the assistance of Charles XII., who had now invaded Russian territory. But he was finally ruined by treachery. It is seldom possible for a leader of this kind to inspire all his followers with equal confidence, and it is rare that a jealous rival is not sitting as a traitor at his hearth. The malcontents, whom Peter had ordered to be treated with every consideration, wrote to him begging him not to advance his troops, for if he did the Cossacks would desert the Don entirely and move to some

other river, perhaps the Kubán. That Peter, in some measure, adopted this advice, shows how dangerous the situation was. Dolgorúky, even after his victory, was not secure. Azof was in peril, as the Zaporovian Cossacks were on the march to attack it. The regular army was not without its malcontents and deserters. Dolgorúky, however, succeeded in defeating the rebels in detail.

The attack on Azof failed after one of the suburbs had fallen into the hands of the Cossacks. This decided the matter. Bulávin had no more hope of success, and half-measures were useless. When Bulávin found that he was in danger of being betrayed by his own followers, he shot himself. This was in July 1708, but the struggle continued for some time longer. A battle of especial severity took place at Pánshin, on the Don, on September 1st, when the deserters from the regular army fought with the courage of despair. The vengeance was severe. Many villages and forts of the Cossacks on the Don and its tributaries were burned, by the express command of the Tsar. The men were removed into other parts of the country, and consequently, as Apráxin cynically remarked, the old people, the women and children, disappeared of themselves—that is, died of hunger. A part of the prisoners were executed. Some Hetmans and also some dissident monks who had prayed for the success of the revolt, were quartered. A good many of the rebels were hanged on gallows and sent floating on rafts down the Don, as a warning to others. It shows the strength of Peter's government that he was able to cope successfully at the same time with these dangerous rebellions and with the invasion of Charles XII.

CHAPTER XXX.

WAR WITH TURKEY.

IN order to make the possession of St. Petersburg secure, it was necessary to gain the possession of the surrounding coasts. Without that the capital would be nothing more than an outpost. When Gustavus III. of Sweden set himself to attack Russia in 1788, the Empress Catherine II. said, in her terror, that it was a very bold thing to build the imperial residence so near to the frontier of the enemy. To secure this end Peter undertook the siege of Wiborg in 1710. Apráxin commanded an army of eighteen thousand men and Cruys a fleet in which Peter himself served as rear-admiral. The town surrendered on June 24th, 1710. Peter wrote to Catherine that it would act as a buffer for the security of Petersburg :

“ Like feather bed ’twixt castle wall,
And heavy brunt of cannon ball.”

In the same year the fortress of Kexholm surrendered to General Bruce, which completed the conquest of Carelia. Riga surrendered to Sheremétief in July, and the next two months witnessed the fall of Pernau and of Reval. Peter could now write: “ The last town has surrendered, and Livonia and Esthonia are entirely cleared of the enemy. In a word, the enemy does not now possess a single town on the left side of the East sea, not even an inch of land.” The capitulations were arranged on conditions extremely favourable for the vanquished. The marriage of

Peter's niece, Anna Ivanovna, with Frederick William, the young Duke of Curland, which took place in St. Petersburg, on November 10th in the same year, also served to strengthen the Tsar's position in these parts. We must now turn from these conquests to the renewed struggle with his ancient enemies the Turks.

We remember that Peter had deferred the attack on Sweden in 1700 until he had received news that peace had been signed between himself and Turkey. The Baltic question was then more pressing than the Eastern question, and one must wait until the other had been decided. At the same time, during his pre-occupation in the North, Peter kept a careful eye upon Turkey. He was always afraid of an attack upon Azof, and his anxiety for this possession caused his frequent visits to Vorónezh. The Turks were equally stubborn in maintaining what they had. When Golítsyn went to Constantinople in 1701 to ratify the peace, he endeavoured to obtain permission for Russian ships to enter the Black Sea; but he received the decided answer that the Sultan would as soon open the interior of his palace to him as the Euxine, and that all Russian commerce must be carried in Turkish bottoms. Not only was the Black Sea to remain a Turkish lake, but the entrance into the Sea of Azof was, if possible, to be closed.

The first permanent ambassador of Russia to the Porte was Peter Andréievitch Tolstói, who towards the end of 1701 arrived at Adrianople, where the Sultan, Mustapha II., then resided. His chief duty was to investigate the condition of the Turkish Empire, and to report upon the strength of her fortified towns—Kertch, Otchakóf, Akherman, Kalisz, and others. The accounts given by Tolstói were not very encouraging. He described himself as regarded with great mistrust. The Turks were afraid of the Russian fleet, and they believed that the Tsar intended to stir up their Christian subjects to revolt. He said that the

Crim-Tartars had repeatedly requested the Sultan to allow them to attack the Russians. The building of Russian forts on the Turkish frontier had caused grave mistrust. There was no doubt, also, that Swedish and Polish influence had been used to excite Turkey to a breach with Russia, and the Zaporovian Cossacks had acted in a similar manner. Peter answered their suspicions by redoubling his efforts in Vorónezh and Azof. The situation was one, not so much of peace as of armed neutrality. A Turkish Embassy, which appeared at Moscow in 1704, repeated these complaints. While an attempt was made to impress them with the strength of the Russian army, by a magnificent review, pains were also taken that they should have no opportunity of making observations, either at Azof or at Vorónezh.

In 1706 matters had become worse. Peter was afraid that after the treaty of Altranstädt Charles XII. would make common cause with the Turks. He endeavoured to urge the Porte to make an attack upon Austria, and followed with great interest the troubles in Hungary and Transylvania, which were an embarrassment to the Emperor. He used the influence of French diplomacy towards the same end. Tolstói prepared for the use of his master an accurate map of the Black Sea, and a topographical account of the surrounding countries. In all his labours Tolstói found that the free use of bribery was his most powerful weapon. The French, on their side, had different objects in view. They were never without the hope that Charles XII. might be induced to take their side against the Grand Alliance, and they thought that Peter was too much involved with the Maritime Powers to prove a trustworthy or effective ally to themselves. They therefore worked upon the Khan of the Crimea, as well as upon the advisers of the Sultan, and they induced that potentate to pay particular attention to the condition of his frontier fortresses.

They represented in 1707 that there could not be a more favourable opportunity for arresting the development of this formidable upstart. All the efforts of the French failed before the laziness and indifference of the Turks.

When the rebellions which we have just narrated broke out in the south-east of the empire, the danger of a Turkish advance became more imminent. We have heard of the friendly communications between Bulávin and the Sultan, and there was a special dread lest the supporters of that formidable leader should gain possession of Azof and Tagan-róg and deliver them to the Turks. Tolstói was instructed to pay particular attention to any communications which might be passing between the rebels and Constantinople. He was not ignorant of the intrigues between Mazeppa and the enemies of Russia. He was aware of the correspondence between the Hetman and the Khan of the Crimea, and of the large sums which the latter had received from Charles XII. and Stanislaus Leczinsky; also that treasonable relations existed between Mazeppa and Yusuf, the Pasha of Silistria. Large sums of money and presents of valuable furs again did their work, and the action of the Porte was paralysed. The failure of Charles and the presence of Peter in Azof caused a terror in the Turkish capital. Many of the inhabitants fled to Asia Minor. Cries were heard in the streets that the Russian fleet had already reached the Bosphorus. There was danger of a popular rising against the Sultan, the Grand Vizier, and the Russian ambassador. Constantinople was crowded with fugitives from the coast, who, with their wives and children, were seeking refuge from the bombardment of the Russian fleet. It needed all Tolstói's diplomacy to allay their terror. The situation was tightly strained. The Turks feared for Constantinople, the Russians for Azof.

It was a serious error on the part of Charles that he neglected this opportunity. He maintained no

permanent ambassador at Constantinople, and his only relations were with the Pasha of Otchakóf. He did not begin seriously to approach the Porte till after the battle of Poltáva, so firm was his belief in his own star and, perhaps, his disdain of heathen aid. Then, however, he sent Poniatowski and Nengebauer to the Sultan. Charles asked for a large body of troops to escort him safely through Poland, but the Turks were aware that to grant his request would be equivalent to a declaration of war both against Poland and Russia. The arrival of Charles at Otchakóf placed them in great perplexity. Peter, on his side, demanded the surrender of Mazeppa; but that adventurous person died, as we have previously related, at the beginning of October 1709. The Turks complained of the violation of their territory by the Russians.

Charles had, meanwhile, removed to Bender, and Tolstói suggested that he might easily be carried off by a sudden raid of Polish cavalry, and taken to Poland. He endeavoured to obtain the same end by bribery, but without success. He, however, concluded an arrangement by which Charles should be escorted by Turkish troops to the Turkish frontier, and then by Russian troops through Russia to his own country. Charles was in despair at this suggestion, and he managed, by an adroit change of government, to place a vizier in office who was favourable to war. The appearance of the Khan of the Crimea in Constantinople also contributed to this result. At last matters came to a climax. Peter, in October 1710, addressed an ultimatum to the Sultan, asking that, in accordance with treaties, Charles might be expelled. The messengers who brought this document were arrested and imprisoned. On December 1st, at a solemn sitting of the Divan, war was determined upon. According to Turkish custom, Tolstói was half stripped of his clothes, set upon a sorry horse, exposed to the derision of the mob, and sent a prisoner to the Seven Towers.

In the present condition of affairs Peter could not hope for allies in Europe, although he made overtures both to Venice and to Louis XIV. At the same time, he was not altogether isolated. He found friends in those oppressed nationalities, Rumanian and Slav, who have since liberated themselves from the Turkish yoke and formed independent kingdoms. The Hospodar of Wallachia, Brancovano, had after Poltáva made a treaty with the Tsar to support him in a war against Turkey, to furnish provisions to the Russian forces, and an auxiliary army thirty thousand strong. In case of success, Wallachia was to become an independent principality, under the protectorate of Russia. Brancovano was so highly honoured that he received the order of St. Andrew.

Racovitsa, Hospodar of Moldavia, was not behind-hand. Hearing that Charles intended to remove from Bender to Jassy he undertook to carry off the Swedish King with a troop of light cavalry which Peter was to supply. Unfortunately, these arrangements came to the knowledge of the Porte. Racovitsa was seized and imprisoned in the Seven Towers, and Mavrocordato became Hospodar in his place. Further, in May 1710, an emissary of the Austrian Servians, Bogdán Pópovitch by name, appeared in Moscow with a petition that Peter would take notice of the brethren who were groaning under a foreign yoke.

When the war broke out the Servians were preparing to attack the Russians with a considerable force, but Brancovano, who had in the meantime betrayed the Tsar, would not let them pass the Danube. In the manifesto with which he justified the war, Peter said that he could not be insensible to the sufferings of the Greeks, Wallachians, Bulgarians, and Servians, who were groaning under the Turkish yoke, and who knew, by their own misery, how much faith was to be placed in the sanctity of treaties.

Peter also entered into communication with the

Montenegrins, the people who have struggled so long and so bravely against the Turks. One Savva Vladislávitch, an oil-trader from Ragusa, who was a friend of Danílo, the Prince of Montenegro, then under a theocratic government, was sent into the Black Mountains to distribute Peter's manifesto. They determined to begin a campaign against the Turks, and were at first fortunate, but afterwards paid dearly for their success. The relations between Peter and Moldavia demand a further notice. Mavrocordato, the successor of Racovitsa, had been deposed by the advice of the Khan of the Crimea, and Cantemir, who enjoyed the full confidence of the Russian Government, had been set up in his place. But no sooner had he arrived at Jassy than he sought the friendship of the Tsar. He began by asking the leave of the Porte to betray the Russian Government, but he probably intended to betray both parties. In January 1711 he informed Peter that, when the war began, he would supply a contingent of twenty thousand cavalry.

A treaty was concluded at Yarosláv on April 24th. In case of victory Moldavia was to be subject to the suzerainty of the Tsar, but was to have a number of privileges, the choosing of its own head, and freedom from taxes. The Russians were to have no officials in Moldavia, nor were they allowed to acquire landed property, nor to marry Moldavian women. The Tsar was not allowed to depose the Hospodar, or indeed any of the Moldavian officials, nor to conclude any peace with Turkey by which Moldavia might be restored to the Turkish Government. This was almost equivalent to actual independence. In a private arrangement Cantemir endeavoured to protect himself. In case of failure, he was to receive property and a dwelling in Russia, together with a pension ; but he might elect to live where he pleased.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DISASTER ON THE PRUTH.

THUS prepared for action, Peter began the war. He was, at this time, out of health and in bad spirits. He wrote to Menshikóf that he was uncertain how things might turn out, and to Apráxin, who asked for instructions, that he was too ill to give any, and that he must act according to circumstances. He was cheered by hearing that the Khan of the Crimea had been repulsed from the Ukraine with heavy loss, and that the Turks were dispirited. As the Turkish army was leaving the capital, a violent storm had rent to pieces the sacred banner of Mohammed which was being carried by the janissaries, and had broken the staff which supported it. The march through Galicia was accompanied by festivities, which were supposed to be in honour of Catherine, who was making the campaign with her husband. At Yarowow there were balls given in her honour by the Polish magnates. Here also he signed the treaty of marriage between Alexis and the Princess of Wolfenbüttel. Schlenitz, who was sent to conclude it, reports that he found the Tsar busy with mathematical instruments, and with the plans of different towns which he intended to besiege. He also praised the clearness of judgment and the modesty with which Peter spoke of the impending war. At Yarosláv there was a meeting between Peter and Augustus, and on June 10th a treaty was signed between them which promised an army-corps for Peter's assistance.

There is no doubt that the Tsar founded great hopes on the movement of the Christians of the Balkan states. He wrote to Sheremétief in March: "We are now receiving letters from all Christians. They hope in the name of God to attack the Turks, in which they see a great advantage. If we delay we shall find it ten times harder, and may lose everything." The Tsar said that he could not expect the Moldavians, Wallachians, Servians, and Bulgarians to move unless the army marched with the utmost speed into the Danubian provinces. If it did so it was quite possible that the greater part of the Turkish army might run away, and in that case the Grand Vizier would not cross the Danube. On the other hand, if there were any delay, the Vizier might compel both Hospodars to fight with the Russians against him, the Christians would not dare to rise, and nothing could assist them except a fortunate victory. Sheremétief was also ordered to distribute plenty of presents when he marched in the provinces, to pay for all provisions, to preserve the strictest discipline, and to attempt to gain over the Tartars of Akkerman and Budshak.

The Russians, indeed, marched with remarkable speed. There was a race between them and the Turks, who should reach the Danube first; but the Turks won. Sheremétief crossed the Dniester on June 10th, and was on the Pruth near Jassy on June 16th. Peter had wished him to proceed directly to the Danube, but it was at the request of Cantemir that he turned aside to the capital of Moldavia. It is said that a council of war was held on the bank of the Dniester, and that the foreigners were strongly opposed to the advance, alleging the example of Charles XII.; but that the Russians, both military and civil, insisted upon it as a necessity. Peter, obliged to follow in the steps of Sheremétief, reached the Pruth on July 5th. The next day he proceeded to Jassy, where he was received by Cantemir. He recognised immediately that he had to do with a

man of remarkable ability. Here also he met a Greek, Thomas Cantacuzene, with the news that the inhabitants of Wallachia were devoted to the Tsar, and were only waiting for the arrival of the Russians to rise against the Turks. He also said that Brancovano was not inclined to make common cause with the Tsar, and that he had come to Peter to report this.

It soon became evident that little reliance was to be placed on the faith of the Hospodars. The personal jealousy which raged between Cantemir and Brancovano was to them a far stronger motive for action than devotion to a cause. We need not go into the details of a dispute in which it is impossible accurately to apportion the blame. But there is no doubt that the untrustworthiness of these important allies placed Peter in a very serious difficulty. He had advanced so far with full confidence in their loyalty, and the staff on which he had leaned was now to break under him. On the other hand, it is certain that the Turks were in great embarrassment. While Peter was in Jassy the Sultan made offers of peace through Brancovano. Peter would not listen to the proposals, partly because he did not believe in their sincerity, and partly because he did not wish to encourage the enemy by an apparent desire to negotiate. He determined, therefore, to send a portion of his army into Wallachia to rouse the population of that province, and went himself to the Pruth, where he soon found himself in a most dangerous position. The Russian army of thirty or forty thousand men was surrounded and attacked by a force of Turks and Tartars which was at least five times as numerous.

The treachery of Brancovano was now to become apparent. When Peter wrote him threatening letters, urging him to supply provisions, he answered that his obligation depended upon the appearance of the Russians in Wallachia, and, as they had not come, he considered all relations at an end. Thereupon he

united his army with that of the Grand Vizier, and delivered over to the Turks the provisions which had been collected for the Russians. The Russian army began to suffer from want of supplies; and Cantemir could not help them, because the crops of Moldavia had been destroyed by swarms of locusts.

The Grand Vizier, who had been informed exactly of the situation, by a spy in the camp of Cantemir, now advanced to the attack. The first engagement took place on July 19th. The inexperienced Moldavian troops retired, but the Russians held their ground. But during the succeeding night a retreat was decided upon. During the operation the Russians were again attacked, on the afternoon of July 20th. They, however, defended themselves and took up a fortified position. The position of Peter and his army was desperate. It was impossible to break through the ring of encircling foes, and nothing was left but to sue for terms. Peter had reason to believe that his overtures would not be rejected, as there was great dissatisfaction in the Turkish camp, and the janissaries, who had suffered severely in the last engagement, were not in a mood to renew the conflict.

Neculce, the commander of the Moldavian troops, relates, in his Memoirs, that on the evening of July 19th, Peter asked him whether it would not be possible to convey Catherine and himself through the hostile forces, intending to leave the command of the army to Sheremétief and Cantemir. Neculce declined, on the ground that failure would involve him in a too serious responsibility. Both Brückner and Schuyler are of opinion that there is nothing improbable in this story, indeed, that it is far more probable than the legend which grew up afterwards, according to which Peter wrote the Senate, ordering them, in case he should become a prisoner in the hands of the Turks, to pay no attention to any order that he might give, and in case of his death to elect the worthiest of the senators

as his successor. Peter's life and liberty were more important to Russians than the loss of an army, and a capitulation made by the sovereign in person was a measure of far greater importance than the surrender of a general. Napoleon I. showed courage, not cowardice, by leaving his army at Smorgoni; and what did Napoleon III. gain by being taken prisoner at Sedan? The popular voice is often mistaken, both as to true heroism and true statesmanship.

Peter was aware that the Grand Vizier had full powers to treat. He therefore sent a trumpeter into the Turkish camp, proposing a negotiation, in order to save further bloodshed. As no answer was received, a second messenger was despatched, saying that in case of refusal the Russians were ready to fight. Indeed, when the answer was delayed, they marched to the attack. Immediately Sheremétief was requested to send some one to discuss terms. Schuyler remarks that the Grand Vizier was informed of what Peter had not as yet learned, the capture of Braila by Rönne with his detachment. The chosen intermediary was the Vice-Chancellor Shaffirof. He had powers to propose the surrender of all Turkish territory occupied by Russians, the giving up of Livonia, but in no case of Ingria, which would imply the loss of Petersburg. He would buy this if necessary by the cession of Pskof and the recognition of Stanislaus Leczinski. His instructions generally were to be ready to give way to the Sultan, but to do as little as he could for the Swedes. More important than these concessions, Shaffirof was empowered to offer a hundred and fifty thousand rubles to the Vizier, and corresponding sums to his chief officers. It has often been said that this last measure was suggested by the acuteness of Catherine.

The negotiations lasted for two days. But Shaffirof acted with commendable promptitude, and Russian gold worked wonders. "With silver spears allay thy fears," said the ancient oracle. Shaffirof received full

powers from Peter on July 22nd, and peace was signed on the following day. The terms were that Peter should surrender Azof with its citadel, raze the fortifications of Tagan-róg and other places, renounce all interference with Polish affairs, and allow the King of Sweden to go where he pleased. On these conditions the Russian army was allowed to retreat. Shaffirof and the son of Sheremétief were to remain with the Turks as hostages until the conditions should be fulfilled. The Russian army had been rescued, almost by a miracle, from a great danger; still, the sacrifices which Peter had agreed to make were very bitter. We see by his offers that he had quite made up his mind that the window which he had determined to open towards Europe was to be sought in the north, and not in the south. He was prepared to surrender almost everything except St. Petersburg.

It was some time before the conditions of peace were carried into effect. Charles XII. was naturally much dissatisfied. Just as the Russians were marching out of their camp he arrived suddenly from Bender, and, being conducted to the tent of the Grand Vizier, threw himself, with his spurs and dirty boots, on the sofa of the Viceroy. He attacked the Vizier for not having taken Peter prisoner and compelled the whole of Russia to pay tribute, and insisted that the treaty should be regarded as null and void, as having been concluded without his consent. The Vizier replied with dignity that Charles was only a guest in Turkey, and that he hoped he would depart as soon as possible, according to the spirit of the treaty. Charles, after threatening the Vizier, left the tent and betook himself to the Khan of Tartary, returning to Bender on the following day. When there, he refused to leave the Turkish dominions, and Peter made this an excuse for not surrendering Azof. He clung to this important possession, acquired by so many sacrifices, and gave orders to Apráxin that

before it should be given up the most careful drawings of all its defences were to be made, and that when the fortifications of Tagan-róg were razed the foundations were to be left intact.

In the meantime the Sultan, suspecting that Shaffirof had been bribed, sent him in exile to Lemnos. Owing partly to the influence of the French Ambassador, war against Russia was again declared, and Shaffirof was sent to join Tolstói in the Castle of the Seven Towers. At last Peter had to give way. Azof and Tagan-róg were surrendered in the winter of 1712; but it was not till July 5th, 1713, that the definite treaty of peace was signed at Adrianople, through the mediation of England and Holland. Something must be said about the fate of Peter's allies. Cantemir, who was opposed to the peace, settled with a number of Moldavians in Russia, while his country was wasted with fire and sword; the Montenegrins had to make peace on unfavourable terms; the Greeks suffered for their sympathy with the invaders; a large number of Moldavians, Wallachians, and Servians entered the Russian service. Thomas Cantacuzene became a distinguished Russian general. Although the great enterprise had ended in disaster, Russia had established her position as the champion of the subject races, a position which she still maintains. Peter had raised aloft the banner of religion and nationality in conflict with the Crescent, and it has never yet been trailed in the dust. Brancovano did his best to engage the favour of the Sultan by displaying a bitter hatred to the Russians; but he could not obliterate the memory of his past treachery. Despite of warnings, he remained in the false security of Bucarest. At last, in the Passion week of 1714, he was solemnly deposed, and was beheaded at Constantinople on his sixtieth birthday, together with his two sons.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CONQUEST OF FINLAND.

THE defeat of Charles XII. at Poltáva, and his virtual captivity at Bender, was a source of considerable embarrassment to the Maritime Powers and their allies, who were pushing the great design of crushing the power of Louis XIV., and who had just reduced him to the necessity of offering the most ignominious terms of peace. The crown of Sweden was in possession, at this time, not only of the duchies of Bremen and Verden, but of a large part of Pomerania, including the towns of Stralsund, Stettin, and Wismar, and the island of Rügen; and Sweden was, in virtue of these possessions, a member of the German Empire. If Peter should, in continuance of the war against Charles, invade his German territories, it would occasion a diversion of interests which would hamper the Grand Alliance and prove favourable to France. A plan was therefore proposed of localising the war, by neutralising the Swedish possessions in Germany.

In pursuance of this, a treaty of neutrality was signed at the Hague, between England, Holland, and the Emperor, on March 31st, 1710, by which none of the Powers at war should attack the possessions of the others situated in Germany, or lying next to them on the mainland. By this treaty Augustus was protected in Saxony, Sweden in Pomerania and Bremen, and Denmark in Holstein, Schleswig, and Jutland. The

treaty was accepted by the Council of Regency at Stockholm, but rejected by Charles at Bender. In order to maintain its provisions, it was necessary to collect an armed force. This, to the strength of sixteen thousand men, was established by the treaty of August 4th, 1710. This army of neutrality, as it was called, was to attack whichever Power crossed the boundaries of the other in contravention of the treaty. Against this Charles also protested.

We must defer for the moment the issue of these arrangements, in order to follow the personal fortunes of Peter. After leaving the Pruth he travelled to Warsaw, where he spent two days in hard work, and two in carousing. His object was to take the waters at Carlsbad, in order that he might recover from the fatigue of his Turkish campaign, and he journeyed thither by way of Thorn, Posen, and Dresden. At Dresden he stayed at an hotel in the Altmärkt, now the Hôtel de l'Europe, and paid several visits to the Green Vaults, where he admired the masterpieces of turning in ivory, and the *chefs d'œuvres* of his friend Dinglinger. Like other mortals, he delighted in the revolving swing of the Grosser Garten, and laughed immoderately when it went round so fast that his companions were thrown out. He also visited the mines of Freiberg, which he had omitted on the previous occasion. He arrived at Carlsbad on September 24th, where he went through the regular cure.

The marriage of Alexis was now imminent, and it was arranged to take place at Torgau, on the Elbe. So, after spending a week at Dresden, a place which seemed to have particular attractions for him, he arrived at Torgau on October 24th. The marriage took place the next day. The service was performed in Russian, except that the questions were asked of the bride in Latin. Four days after the wedding Alexis was sent to Thorn to superintend the provisioning of the troops. At Torgau Peter made the

personal acquaintance of Leibnitz. From Torgau Peter journeyed to Crosser, when he had an interview with the Crown Prince of Prussia, and two of the Danish ministers, in order to arrange matters about Pomerania, which he was anxious to invade. He did not reach Petersburg till January 9th, 1712, after an absence of nearly a year.

The protest of Charles XII. had apparently deprived Sweden of the advantages of the treaty of neutrality mentioned above, and Peter's best course seemed to be, if he wished to prevent his possessions on the Baltic from being attacked in the rear, to occupy the provinces held by her on the south of that sea. He at first proposed that the "neutrality corps" should join him, but that had been scarcely collected; therefore, under protests from other Powers, he took the matter into his own hands, and in the autumn of 1711 an army consisting of Russians, Saxons, and Danes, laid siege to Stralsund. The operations had but little effect, from the jealousies which existed between the allies and the divergence of their views. They also had to reckon with the attitude of the Grand Alliance Harley and St. John were now in power, and negotiations were beginning with Louis XIV. for the conclusion of peace. Before this, the principal pre-occupation of the allies had been to keep the Northern War within bounds; now the allies might act together to prevent Sweden from being crushed. Charles XII. had rejected all offers for a French Alliance; he had thus deserved well of the Maritime Powers, and there was no reason why they should wish to see the balance of power in the north of Europe disturbed.

The Tsar reached Stralsund in June 1712. He found everything at a standstill, because the Danes had not furnished the promised cannon. The allies were obliged to retire. Peter wrote to Menshikóf: "I consider myself very unfortunate to have come here. God sees my good intentions and the crooked

dealings of others. I cannot sleep at night on account of the way in which I am treated." He overwhelmed Frederick, King of Denmark, with reproaches for the failure of his duty. Worn out with labours and disappointments, he went to take the waters at Carlsbad and afterwards at Teplitz. From there he was recalled by the news that King Augustus was negotiating a separate peace with Charles, which was only prevented by the absolute refusal of the Swedish king to recognise Augustus as King of Poland. He was therefore able to stay at his favourite city of Dresden, where he again inhabited the beautiful house of the famous jeweller Dinglinger. The philosopher Leibnitz met Peter at Carlsbad, and accompanied him to Teplitz and Dresden. He was representing partly the interests of Austria and partly his own, and it is difficult to determine whether, in his anxiety for Russian progress, he was actuated chiefly by motives of philanthropy, or by the desire for pensions and decorations. Peter also found time to pay a visit to Berlin, where nothing proved worthy of notice. The magnificent Frederick was now nearing the end of his reign, and the relations between the Tsar and his successor were to be of a different character.

Leaving Berlin, Peter joined his troops at Mecklenburg; but he was not in time to prevent a serious disaster. The active Swedish general, Count Stenbock, had collected a large force, intending to meet Charles XII. in Poland, whither report said that he was coming, with a large force of Turks and Tartars. Hearing, however, that the Danes were marching against him, he determined to attack them before the Russians could come to their assistance. The result of this was the battle of Gadebusch, when the Danes were defeated on December 20th, King Frederick IV. being nearly taken prisoner. Count Fleming, with three thousand Saxon cavalry, among them the famous Maurice de Saxe, the son of King Augustus and Anna

Königsmark, had joined the Danes after the battle had begun, and it was their flight at the first onset that caused the defeat. Maurice said afterwards that he had then learned how not to fight. A fortnight later Stenbock burned to the ground the whole of the town of Altona, on the pretext that bread was being baked there for the supply of the allied troops. Peter reached the place a week after the fire, and distributed a thousand rubles amongst the poorer inhabitants. He then proceeded to Hanover, where he made the acquaintance of the Elector George Lewis, who was shortly to succeed to the throne of England, under the title of George I. England was beginning to exhibit jealousy of the growing power of Russia, and it was important for Peter's interests that the future king should be on his side.

It was but a short journey from Hanover to Wolfenbüttel, where Peter executed the delicate task of persuading the Tsarevna Charlotte to return to St. Petersburg. Angry at the continued absence of Alexis, she had sought refuge in her father's home. Soon after her arrival at the Russian capital, Charlotte gave birth to a daughter, who received the name of Margarita Maria. A more important visit was to Frederick William, the new King of Prussia, the father of Frederick the Great. His great passion was for tall soldiers, and he would naturally be captivated by a sovereign of Peter's colossal proportions. Frederick William had been impressed by them when he first saw Peter, two years before, as Crown Prince. The Tsar knew how to gain his favour. On his return he sent him eighty giant dragoons, as well as twelve hundred muskets from the manufactory of Tula. In fact, on different occasions, no fewer than two hundred and forty-eight of these acceptable presents were dispatched to Berlin. For the moment, however, the new king was not prepared to enter into any embarrassing engagements until he

had gained more experience in the thorny paths of politics.

After the battle of Gadebusch and the burning of Altona, Stenboch had been induced to throw himself into the fortress of Tönning, the foremost stronghold of Holstein. The Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein were at this time claimed by two rivals, the King of Denmark and the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp. The latter, Charles Frederick, a boy of twelve, was the nephew and heir-presumptive of Charles XII., and Stenbock might have some pretext for defending the dominions of his future sovereign. He was, however, in the middle of May, persuaded to surrender himself, with his army of thirteen thousand men, under the promise that he should be allowed to return to Sweden, a promise which was never performed. Stenbock died in prison at Copenhagen in 1716. Peter replenished his coffers by the ransom paid by Stenbock and by contributions levied upon Hamburg and Lübeck. He spent the money in building ships. He also contrived, by a series of intrigues which it would be tedious to relate, to gain possession of Stettin. General Meyerfeld, who held it, capitulated on the last day of September, and a convention was signed, by which, not only Stettin, but Stralsund, Wismar, and the island of Rügen, should be sequestered, as they were captured, to the King of Prussia. This caused great pleasure to the Court of Berlin, and corresponding disgust to that of Copenhagen. King Frederick IV. protested against the arrangement, but without effect.

Peter now turned his attention to the conquest of Finland, which, in a letter to Apraxin, he called "the mother of Sweden." Peter appeared off Helsingfors about the very time that Stenbock was surrendering at Tönning. The Swedes speedily abandoned it, as well as the town of Borgå and Abo, the capital of the province, being unable to defend these places against

an overwhelming force. But no battle took place till October 17th, 1713, when Armfeldt was defeated, with heavy loss, by Apráxin and Golítsyn, at Tammerfors. This placed the whole of Southern Finland in Russian hands, and a year later there was not a single Swedish soldier left in the province. About the same time (August 9th, 1714) Peter gained his first naval battle off Hango Head, a place well known to Englishmen in the Crimean War. In this engagement he captured a frigate, nine galleys, and a hundred and sixteen guns, and was invested with the title of vice-admiral by Ramodanófsky.

On November 22nd, Charles XII. suddenly appeared before Stralsund. During the negotiations, which ended in the treaty of Adrianople, the Turks had done their best to persuade Charles to leave Bender and to go home through Poland. On his refusal, they attempted to carry him off by force. He stood a siege in his own house, and, when most of his supporters had been killed or wounded, had tried to escape, but was taken prisoner and shut up in a fortress near Adrianople. He left Turkey with a large suite on October 1st, and, after undergoing great privations, arrived at the threatened stronghold. He at first desired to push on the war with vigour, but was soon persuaded to adopt the policy of Baron Goertz, whom he made his minister and favourite. As it was, he refused to recognise the sequestrations, and demanded the surrender of Stettin, refusing, however, to pay for it.

This attitude forced Frederick William into active measures. Treaties were signed with Denmark and Hanover, and in July 1715, after tedious delays, an army of sixty thousand men, consisting of Prussian, Danish, and Saxon troops, invested Stralsund. The Kings of Denmark and Prussia, as well as the Russian ambassadors, Dolgorúky and Golófskin, were present in the camp, but the siege did not actually begin before October. We are told by an eye-witness : "The day

before yesterday the Danish king reviewed the Prussian cavalry and dined with the King of Prussia, when, for joy at the capture of Usedom, they made mighty merry, and both kings danced about the table, even without ladies, and did other similar things; and the Danish king smoked tobacco, although it was against his nature." Strangely enough, no Russian troops took part in the operation, much to the disgust of Peter. As Brückner remarks, in this case, as in others, everything seemed to go wrong where Peter could not be present in person. Charles XII. defended the place vigorously, but was at last obliged to capitulate on December 22nd, 1715. In order that he might not fall into the hands of his enemies, he left the place a few hours earlier in a little boat.

In the summer of this year a combined English and Dutch fleet sailed into the Baltic and left a ship or two at the principal ports to protect English commerce. At Reval, their farthest point, Peter went to meet them, and dined on board the English flagship with Admiral Norris, whom he gave his portrait, set in diamonds. In his own private circle, joy was chequered with sorrow. His daughter Natalia died in May, and the Crown Princess Charlotte in November, after giving birth to a son. He was, however, consoled by the birth of a second son, on November 10th, 1715, called Peter after his father. He wrote to the commander of the guard: "I announce to you that this night God has given me a recruit named after his father. God grant me to see him under a musket. I beg you to announce it with my compliments to the officers and soldiers. What is spent for drink write down to my account."

The time has now come to speak of the relations between Peter and his eldest son, Alexis, which, although in many details controverted and obscure, cannot but leave a stain upon his memory.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE FLIGHT OF ALEXIS.

IN the discontent which arose in consequence of Peter's reforms, it was natural that the dissatisfied should look somewhere for an alleviation of their fears. They had turned at first to Peter's brother Iván, and then to his son Alexis. Alexis became the subject of many stories which had no other foundation except the general dislike to Peter's government. It was said that he could not endure the foreigners, and that he bitterly hated the *boyars* and other officers who served as Peter's instruments. The fact that many were longing for the reaction which Alexis was to inaugurate, made him a dangerous person. His name might be used as the watchword of a conspiracy, and it was very difficult for such a situation to exist without producing an enmity between father and son. Rumours depicted the antagonism as worse than it really was. In 1705 it was believed in France that Peter had desired to murder Alexis as Iván the Cruel had once killed his heir with his own hands. The Tsar, it was said, had ordered Menshikóf to have Alexis executed, but, to the great delight of Peter, he had not carried out the command. The Russian Ambassador Matvéief was even asked if anything of the kind was likely to have happened. He was naturally indignant, and replied that all such tales were manufactured in Sweden, and that such an action would be impossible, not only in the great Tsar, but in the meanest of Russian peasants.



ALEXIUS PETROWITZ

LEX CRUX IMPERII PRINCIPES HEREDITARIUS.

ALEXIS PETRÓVITCH (PETER'S SON).

By W'eigel.

The best way of averting the impending struggle would have been to educate Alexis abroad, and Peter was very anxious to do this. In 1699 he thought of sending him to Dresden, in 1701 to Vienna, in 1704 to Paris ; and we have the authority of Marlborough for saying that he was anxious that he should be brought up in England. None of these plans were carried out; but Peter, as far as he could, entrusted the education of his son to foreigners. Soon after he had been separated from his mother Endoxia, at the age of eight, he was entrusted to a German, Neugebauer. He remained for a year under this tutor; but Neugebauer was eventually dismissed, in consequence of a quarrel with the Russians who surrounded his charge. The occasion of the quarrel is sufficiently characteristic to be related. On June 3rd, 1702, Alexis was dining with Neugebauer, Alexis Narýshkin, and his former tutor Viázemsky. Alexis, after eating one piece of fowl, helped himself to another, upon which Narýshkin told him to clear his plate, and to put the bones of the piece he had eaten back into the dish. Neugebauer declared that this was ill-bred. Upon this Alexis whispered to Narýshkin, which Neugebauer said was also ill-bred. A dispute then arose. Neugebauer said: "None of you understand anything. When I get abroad with the Tsarévitch, then I know what I shall do." He then called the Russians barbarous dogs, and pigs, threw down his knife and fork, and went away cursing.

Neugebauer was, naturally, dismissed, and was succeeded by Huyssen, who was introduced to Peter by Patkul. He wrote out a colossal plan of education for his charge, but he could not do much, because Peter insisted that Alexis should serve as a common soldier in the Northern War. Huyssen had the good sense to remain friends with Menshikóf, and in some degree to place himself under him. We can believe, however, that Menshikóf was not a model

governor, and there is nothing incredible in his once having pulled Alexis to the ground by his hair, without Peter making any objection to the treatment. Alexis was born in March 1690, and was now therefore thirteen years old.

Huyssen informs us that after the taking of Narva in 1704, Peter, after admonishing him to follow his example, and to spare neither trouble nor danger, told him that if he did not follow his advice he would not recognise him as his son, but would pray God to punish him in this world and in the next. Huyssen was now sent on a diplomatic mission, and Alexis fell again into the hands of Russians. Just at the most important period of life his education was most neglected. He lived like a private person either at Preobrazhensk or at Moscow, with an income of twelve thousand rubles. He was left to himself, and fell into bad company. Alexis, at a later period, complained to his brother-in-law, the Emperor Charles VI., that Menshikóf had not only purposely neglected his education, but had encouraged a propensity to drink which had undermined his health. Had Peter been able to take personal charge of his son's education, and to initiate him into his political and military plans, he might have developed into a different character. The principal reason of the breach between the father and the son was that the latter did not appreciate or care for Peter's efforts in the civilisation of Russia, and the introduction of the European spirit. If Alexis had always been by his side, their divergence of views might either have been prevented altogether or made much less serious. But whilst the Tsar was altering the history of the world, and founding a new Russia, the Tsarévitch was left to the influence of those who grumbled at their sovereign, disliked his exploits, and united narrowness of mind with rough manners and disordered lives.

There is a story that when some one was dilating to

Napoleon I. on the terrible sorrow that his death would cause to France, the Emperor asserted that there would be a general feeling of joy, that men would shrug their shoulders with an "*Ouf!*" of relief, and thank Heaven that they were going to have a quiet time once more. We may suppose that this was the general feeling at Moscow, with regard to Peter's enterprises. Alexis undoubtedly admired, and perhaps loved, his father, but he was of a quiet, peaceable disposition, and had little sympathy with the constant worry of campaign after campaign, travel after travel, innovation after innovation.

Alexis was not incapable or stupid. He was fond of reading, especially in theology. In this he resembled his grandfather the Tsar Alexis, and his uncle the Tsar Theodore. A conversation with a priest, the discussion of a question of casuistry, gave him as much pleasure as the annoyance of a sea-journey, or the responsibilities of active government, appeared to him intolerable. Alexis had no training in mathematics, drawing, and general technical skill, in which his father was so proficient. On the other hand, he took particular delight in the theological subtleties which have descended to the Russian Church from Byzantine Christianity. These qualities, however amiable, were not calculated to make Russia a great European Power.

We know, from what has been already said, what Peter's tastes were, and what was the nature of his studies. Alexis, on the contrary, busied himself in books on the Heavenly Manna, on the history of saints; he studied the rules of the Benedictine Order, and the "*Imitatio*" of Thomas à Kempis. He was well acquainted with the Church history of the Middle Ages, and especially the history of Doctrine. He was more fitted for a learned monk than a sovereign, but at the same time had a weak and self-indulgent nature. If Peter could have sketched for himself the ideal of a successor, it would have been as far removed as possible

from the character of Alexis. He was afterwards induced to confess upon the rack that his intercourse with priests and monks had been fatal to him ; that they had confirmed him in drinking and in other bad habits ; that they had inspired him with a dislike for all serious work, and had made, not only the occupation, but the very person, of his father nauseous to his taste. We have seen that the opposition to Peter took largely an ecclesiastical character, that he was branded as a heretic, and as the Child of Hell. The minister who did most to spread the belief that Peter was Antichrist was protected by Alexis. It was an irremediable misfortune that Alexis, from his fifteenth to his twentieth year, should have been left to the influence of stagnant priests and reactionary monks, instead of living in the fresh stream of experience which the energy and genius of his father was bringing into existence.

A strong influence over Alexis was exercised by Jacob Ignátief, his confessor. They had the same wishes and aspirations. Once, when Alexis confessed that he wished his father were dead, Ignátief said to him : " God will pardon you. We all wish he were dead, because he lays such heavy burdens on the people. On the contrary," said the confessor, " all the people love you and place their hopes in you." Ignátief was the intermediary of communication between Alexis and his mother Eudoxia. In 1706 the Tsarévitch paid her a visit in the convent of Suzdal, which annoyed his father very much ; and besides this there was an interchange of letters and presents. Many letters which passed between Alexis and his confessor are preserved. We see by them that the young man was driven by the harshness of his father to resort to trickery and dissimulation. At one time, when abroad, he begged Ignátief to send him a priest in the disguise of his servant, that his soul might be saved in case he should die away from Russia. In him there was a curious

mixture of religion and deceit. He set before himself a deep devotion as the end, but was unscrupulous as to the means. He thought it allowable to do anything for what he conceived to be the interests of the true faith. Alexis and his friends formed a secret society, who corresponded in cipher and called each other by nicknames. They appear to have taken no part in politics, but to have been occupied with ecclesiastical questions and the details of drinking parties. Members of this society were the husband of Alexis' nurse, and some of the Naryshkins. The Archbishop of Krotitsa, alone of them, held a high position.

When the project for the marriage of the Tsarévitch to the Princess of Wolfenbüttel was on foot, the "Society" was naturally anxious that she should be admitted to the Greek Church. Alexis corresponded on this subject with Ignátief, and held out hopes of a conversion at some future period. As before narrated, the marriage took place on October 25th, 1711. At first they lived happily together, with mutual devotion to each other. Still, the first winter had to be passed in Thorn, a desolate region, wasted by war. Charlotte wrote to her mother: "The houses opposite are half burned and empty. I myself live in a monastery. However, several Polish ladies from the neighbourhood have already visited me. There is not in these regions a single small village where there are not two or three noble families. They live there winter and summer, and for that reason, even in the largest towns it is impossible to find a single person of quality." Their chief difficulty was a want of money.

Charlotte did not go to St. Petersburg till the spring of 1713, and her husband, who was then in Finland, did not return to the capital till late in the summer. After a short period of happiness, disputes arose, partly from want of money and partly from Alexis' habits of drinking. He treated his wife roughly, and spoke disrespectfully of her to the

servants. The relations between them went from bad to worse. Alexis became ill, and his doctor advised him to go to Carlsbad. His wife was told nothing about it. The travelling carriage appeared at the door on June 15th, 1714, and Alexis said, "Good-bye. I am going to Carlsbad." During his six months' absence he did not once write to her, although a daughter was born to him on July 23rd. He returned to Petersburg in December, and at first was pleasant to his wife and devoted to his child; but he soon fell in love with Afrosinia, a Finnish girl, a serf of his tutor Viázemsky. The relations between them continued till his death. His habits of drunkenness increased, and his health suffered seriously. In April 1715 he had to be carried senseless out of church, and his wife, writing of it, said: "I ascribe his illness to the fast, and to the great quantity of brandy which he drinks daily, for he is usually drunk." On October 23rd, 1715, Charlotte gave birth to a son, who afterwards became the Emperor Peter II.; but after her confinement a fever set in, and she died towards midnight on November 1st. The very day after the funeral Catherine, the second wife of Peter, gave birth to a boy. The conflict between Tsar and Tsarévitch, which had long been coming to a head, now broke out.

On the day of Charlotte's funeral, November 7th, Peter handed his son a letter, dated October 22nd, which contained an ultimatum. In this he stated that he considered Alexis unfit to carry on the business of government, that he had no care for military affairs, and no desire to learn anything. "To whom, then," he continued, "shall I leave that which I have, by God's help, planted and increased? To him who is like the idle servant in the gospel, who buried his talent in the ground? I think, besides, what a bad and obstinate character you have. How much have I scolded you for it, and not merely scolded, but beaten

you! How many years have I not spoken with you?" He concludes by saying that if he does not change he will deprive him of his right to the throne, and cut him off like a blasted limb. "In very truth, by the will of God, I will fulfil it; for as I have not spared my life for my country and my subjects, how can I spare you who are unfit? Better a deserving stranger than an unworthy son." Three days later Alexis replied to this letter by renouncing the succession. He said: "I see myself unsuitable and unfit for this business, for I am quite devoid of memory, without which it is impossible to do anything, am weak and do not possess all my intellectual and bodily powers, and have become unsuited to the government of such a people, for which it is necessary to have a man not so rotten as I." He alluded to his new-born brother, to whom he wished good health, and committed his children to his father's care. After this Prince Basil Dolgorúky had a conversation with Peter, and told Alexis that he had saved him from the scaffold.

At the end of the year the Tsar became seriously ill, and the last sacraments were administered to him. As soon as he recovered he wrote another and stronger letter to Alexis, dated January 30th, 1716. In this he said that he must either change his character or become a monk. If he did not give an immediate answer, he would be treated as a criminal. Alexis answered very shortly, saying that he wished to go into a monastery, and begged permission to do so, signing himself, "Your slave and unworthy son Alexis." Just at this time Peter was leaving Russia for a long travel abroad. Before he went he visited Alexis, whom he found ill in bed. The Tsarévitch repeated his desire to enter a monastery, but his father said that it was not an easy thing for a young man; he had better think over it carefully, and write his decision after a delay of six months. When this period had expired, Alexis received a letter from his

father, asking for an immediate decision, either to join him or to become a monk. He replied at once that he would join the Tsar, but he had other plans in his head ; he intended to go either to Vienna or to Rome, and to live under the protection of the Emperor or the Pope until his father's death. He thought that this would probably happen within two years. He would then return to Russia and act as regent during the minority of his brother. He did not apparently contemplate ascending the throne himself. He left Petersburg on October 7th. When he arrived at Danzig he disguised himself as a Russian officer, adopted an assumed name, and travelled by way of Breslan and Prague to Vienna.

Here, late one evening, he burst into the bedroom of the Imperial Vice-Chancellor, Count Schönborn. He said that he came to the Emperor, his brother-in-law, for protection, to save his life. " They wish to kill me ; they wish to deprive me and my poor children of the throne. My father wishes to deprive me of my life and of the throne. The Emperor must save me." He was not allowed to see the Emperor, but was taken back to his hotel, and was then sent, in disguise, first to the Castle of Weierburg, near Vienna, and then to Ehrenberg in the Tyrol, in the valley of the Lech. Here he lived very happily. Afrosinia was with him, disguised as a page. He had a good table, servants, and plenty of books. No one connected with the place had the slightest idea who he was.

Peter of course made every effort to discover the hiding-place of his son, but it was not till the end of April 1717 that he found out where he was ; and even then he would not believe it. Alexis, who was ready to do anything rather than return to his father, was conducted with great secrecy to Naples, and shut up in the Castle of St. Elmo, accompanied by his mistress Afrosinia. As soon as he arrived he wrote letters to the Senate and the clergy, giving the reasons for his

flight, and begging them always to remember him. These letters never reached their destination, but were detained in Vienna, where they still are. The removal of Alexis, although conducted with the greatest secrecy, was carefully watched, and Peter very soon knew where he was to be found. He decided to send Tolstói, the most expert of his diplomatists, to Vienna, to demand the surrender of his son. The Emperor took time to reply, but Tolstói, by the influence of the Princess of Wolfenbüttel, obtained permission to have an interview with Alexis.

The emissaries arrived at Naples on October 5th. Tolstói presented to Alexis a letter from his father, saying that if he would return he should have no punishment, but his best love, but, should he refuse, he should be punished as a traitor. Alexis asked for two days, to consider what he should do, and then said that it would be dangerous for him to return. Tolstói threatened that the Tsar would take him dead or alive. Alexis became very ill, and the Viceroy's secretary was bribed to suggest to him that the Emperor might withdraw his protection. Tolstói now took a bolder tone, and threatened Alexis that Peter was on the road to Italy to seize him by force. Worn out by arguments and threats, he consented to go, on condition that he might live quietly in the country in the company of Afrosinia. Having found his weak point, Tolstói obtained an order that Afrosinia should be separated from him; but she was allowed to stay one night longer, and the next morning, persuaded, it is believed, by Afrosinia, he declared his readiness to go to Russia if he might marry her before he reached St. Petersburg. Tolstói approved of this, and recommended the Tsar to consent to it, saying that it would discredit Alexis in the eyes of Europe and give the impression that the sole reason for his flight was his devotion to his mistress. Alexis wrote to his father in submissive terms, reminding him of his promise

of forgiveness, and Peter replied that he confirmed the pardon which had been promised by Tolstói, and was also ready to consent to the proposed marriage, if his son should desire it when he returned, but that it had better take place in Russia. Alexis, he said, might live where he pleased, in one of his country palaces.

Alexis travelled slowly home. He visited the shrine of St. Nicholas at Bari, spent some time in Rome, and had an interview with the Pope. Afrosinia was left behind at Venice, on the ground of health. On January 21st the travellers reached Riga, and Tolstói left Alexis to proceed to the Tsar at Moscow. A fortnight later he arrived at Tver, on the way to Moscow. From this place he wrote to Afrosinia: "Thank God, all is well, and I expect to be rid of everything, so as to live with you, if God allow, in the country, where we shall not have to trouble about anything. As soon as I arrive I will write to you all in detail." Afrosinia's replies are not worthy of her lover's devotion. She appears as an ignorant, vulgar woman, occupied with material desires. She arrived at St. Petersburg at the end of April, and was immediately arrested and imprisoned. She bore a child, but of its sex or fate we know nothing.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DEATH OF ALEXIS.

ON January 1st, 1718, Alexis entered Moscow. Three days later a solemn assembly was held in the Kremlin of all the dignitaries, temporal and spiritual. The Tsarévitch was introduced as a prisoner, without his sword, accompanied by Tolstói. He wept bitterly, threw himself on his knees before his father, and begged pardon for his crimes. A paper was read, signed by him, confessing his wickedness, and asking that his life might be spared. Peter then made a speech, recounting his offences, and saying that he could answer nothing to them, but he begged only for pardon and life, and renounced the inheritance. He therefore granted him pardon, on the condition that he should reveal all who had been his accomplices. A printed manifesto was then read, which declared Alexis disinherited, and proclaimed Peter Petróvitch as Tsarévitch and heir to the throne. The assembly then proceeded to the Cathedral of the Assumption, where Alexis took the oath of allegiance to the new heir, and promised never to attempt to regain the inheritance for himself. All present took a similar oath. In the evening the manifesto was published to the world, and for three days the people were invited to the cathedral, to take the new oath of allegiance.

Peter had broken his word. The pardon had been promised absolutely without condition, but now the condition was made that Alexis should reveal all his

advisers and accomplices. A number of persons were arrested, Marie Alexéievna Peter's half-sister, Kikin, Viázemsky, Basil Dolgorúky, Jacob Ignátief, Iván Athanásief, the servant of Alexis, and many others. St. Petersburg was placed in a state of siege. No one was allowed to leave the city, and apothecaries were forbidden to sell arsenic and other poisons, for which there was a sudden demand. The Tsar conducted the whole inquiry in person. He ordered the arrests, drew up the lists of interrogations, and was present at the tortures. He seemed to be possessed by a passion to discover every hasty word spoken years before, every treasonable thought, the most secret desires of the accused. Every act of torture increased the number of the proscribed, and the inquiry was extended to all who had in the slightest degree expressed any discontent or bitterness against the Tsar and his system.

Amongst the accused appeared Peter's former wife Eudoxia. It was found on inquiry that she had broken the rules of the convent by not wearing the nun's habit, and also that for some time she had conducted an amorous intrigue with a Major Gliébof. She was punished by being sent to a convent at Old Ládoga, where she lived till the accession of her grandson, Peter II., in 1728. After that she resided at Moscow, and occasionally appeared at Court. She died in 1730, in the reign of the Empress Anna, Dositheus Bishop of Rostóf, was accused of having prophesied the death of the Tsar, and of having offered public prayers for Eudoxia. He said, before his torture: "Am I the only guilty one in this affair? Look into your own hearts, all of you. What do you find there? Listen to what is spoken among the people." Nothing could be proved against him, but he was condemned to a cruel death. Marie Alexéievna was imprisoned in Schüsselburg until 1721, when she was allowed to return to St. Petersburg, and died in 1723.

Some of the prisoners were executed on March 26th and 28th. Gliébof, after suffering horrible tortures, was impaled. The Bishop of Rostóf was broken on the wheel; his head was cut off and exposed on a stake. Kikin was treated in the same way. Dokúkin, the one person who had dared to protest against the oath of allegiance to the Tsarévitch Peter, was placed three times on the rack, and afterwards broken on the wheel, declaring, as he died, that he was ready to suffer anything for the word of Christ. Basil Dolgorúky was saved from death, but was deprived of his honours and dignities, and was exiled. He was, however, pardoned on the occasion of Catherine's coronation, and made a field-marshal by Peter II. Ignátief was executed in December. On the great square before the Kremlin, where the executions took place, a scaffold of white stone was erected. All round were iron spikes, on which the heads were fixed, while the bodies of the criminals were heaped up at the top. Anxious as Peter was to introduce European customs, when revenge was in question he suffered himself to rage like an Oriental despot.

The Tsar now returned to St. Petersburg, accompanied by Alexis. The young man was given apparent liberty, and lived in a house near the palace. When he congratulated the Tsaritsa Catherine at the festival of Easter, he begged her to intercede for him that he might marry Afrosinia; but no notice was taken of his request. Peter went to live at his new residence of Peterhof, and here his son and Afrosinia were examined by him in person. She gave a full account of all their life abroad, and repeated every unguarded word and expression that she could remember of Alexis'. It became certain, from her evidence, that he had himself composed the manifesto to the Senators, sent from St. Elmo. She said also that he had received the news of rebellion with joy, that he had

been determined not to be deprived of the succession; she spoke of the attempts he had made to form a party for himself, and of the hope that if, after Peter's death, some were on the side of Peter Petróvitch, others would be for Alexis.

Perhaps the worst thing Peter heard was the design of Alexis, after he should come to the throne, to disband the fleet, reduce the army, and to remain quiet at home, having no more wars. He saw by this that, if Alexis succeeded—and in a country like Russia his succession was always possible—the system to which he had devoted his life was in danger of being destroyed, and that there was nothing left for him but to put Alexis to death. The result of these inquiries was that Alexis was arrested and confined in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, while the traitress Afrosinia reaped the reward of her villainy by being released without torture. She lived the rest of her life at St. Petersburg, and married an officer of the guard.

Peter now consulted the Bishops and clergy as to what he ought to do. They took refuge in the utterances of the Bible, and showed that if the Tsar wished to punish his son he had authority to do so, and if he desired to pardon him he could follow the example and precepts of Christ. He then assembled a High Court of Justice consisting of a hundred and twenty seven members. The Tsarévitch was first tortured with the knout. He was then, under the direction of Tolstói, made to write answers to some written questions. He expanded the information already given by Afrosinia. He mentioned the names of persons from whom he expected a favourable reception, in case of his accession to the throne and his return to Russia. He admitted that he had heard of attempts to put the Tsar to death, and also that if there had been an insurrection in Peter's lifetime he would not have refused to place himself at the head of it.

In all this there was no proof of definite action, but merely statements as to how he might have acted in the case of certain eventualities. But the Tsar interpreted this to imply that he intended to seize the government, if possible, even in his father's lifetime, and with the help of rebels. He also admitted that he would have been glad of the armed intervention of the Emperor Charles VI. in his favour, and that he would have richly rewarded the imperial troops if they had assisted him in gaining the throne. Brückner tells us that recent researches have made it probable that these answers were written down by Alexis at the dictation of other persons. After another spell of torture he confessed that he had written a letter to the Metropolitan of Kief, with the object of stirring up the population of Little Russia to rebellion. At last, on July 5th, the High Court declared unanimously that Alexis had for years concealed plans of conspiracy, that he had desired the death of his father, and had wished to acquire the throne during his father's lifetime with the assistance of the Emperor.

The sequel is buried in obscurity. The Russian writer Ustriálof, who, together with Soloviéf, is the great authority for all facts connected with the life of Peter, found the following entry in the garrison journals of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul: "On July 7th, at eight o'clock in the morning there assembled in the garrison his Majesty, Prince Menshikóf, and others. The torture took place. At eleven they all separated. On the same day, at six o'clock in the afternoon, the Tsarévitch Alexis Petróvitch died in prison." The probability is that he died in consequence of the torture. One blow of the knout might cause death, and Alexis had received forty. The official report published to the world stated that when Alexis had heard the sentence of death he was struck with apoplexy, and that after he had received the consolations of his religion and had been reconciled

with his father, he died. This account was, of course, disbelieved, and a number of stories gained credence about the manner of his death. Some said that he was beheaded, others that he was poisoned, others that he was smothered with cushions. De Bie, the Dutch resident, wrote to his Government that Alexis had died from having his veins opened. His despatches were seized at the post-office and diplomatic representations were made, in consequence of which De Bie had to leave St. Petersburg, and was appointed by his Government to Stockholm. The popular belief was that Peter had murdered Alexis with his own hand.

The conduct of Peter after the death of his son was certainly not that of a grieving father. The next day was the anniversary of the battle of Poltava. It was celebrated in the usual manner, the festivities ending with a banquet and a ball. On the day following, the body of the Tsarévitch was exposed publicly, with the face and right hand uncovered, so that all who pleased might kiss it and bid him farewell. On July 10th the birthday of the Tsar was kept with all customary rejoicings. A new vessel, designed by Peter, was launched, and named the *Liesna*. On the following evening, four days after his death, the body of Alexis was buried by the side of his wife. The foreign ministers were not invited, and were told not to wear mourning, as the Tsarévitch had died a criminal. We are told that the preacher chose for his text the words, "O Absalom, my son, my son," and that Peter wept bitterly.

John Perry, whose book on the condition of Russia at that time has been already quoted, and who had left that country before the catastrophe of Alexis, wrote that if Peter should die, much of the good effected by him would perish with him, and that the old abuses would be repeated. The Tsarévitch, he said, had quite a different temperament to his father, and was given up to bigotry and superstition. He would

therefore re-introduce the old Russian ways, and many of the noble and praiseworthy things which Peter had begun would be left uncompleted. This is the real justification, if any could be found, for the treatment of Alexis. An admirer of Peter might say that he was ready to sacrifice everything for the advancement of Russia, an essential condition of which was, that the country should adopt European ways. For this purpose he sacrificed himself, his wife, and even his son. But in politics, as judged by the historian, the end does not justify the means, and Peter's conduct must be weighed by the ordinary standards of morality. In one way Alexis was avenged. Peter Petróvitch, the son on whom his father had set his heart as a worthy successor, died in 1719 ; and the child of the murdered Tsarévitich, the grandchild of Eudoxia, eventually ascended the throne as Peter II.

A French proverb says, "It is only the dead who come back." So it was with Alexis. For twenty years after his death his ghost seemed to arise, and to threaten the stability of the fabric, the foundations of which had been laid in his blood. In 1723 a beggar named Rodionof gave himself out as Alexis in the neighbourhood of Vologda. In 1725 two false Alexis' appeared, one a soldier, named Semikof ; and a Siberian peasant. They were both executed. In 1732 another beggar, Trushenik, arose as the true Alexis amongst the Don Cossacks. And in 1738 the last and most formidable pretender was seen at Kief, in the person of Minisky, a common labourer. He attracted many people to him : a priest gave him assistance. After a long trial, the impostor and his accomplice perished by the death of impaling. Many other persons were executed by barbarous deaths ; they were mutilated, hung, beheaded, broken on the wheel, and quartered.

All these horrors, which stain the reign and the

character of Peter, from the fate of the Streltsi to that of Alexis, have the same origin and the same explanation. There was a deep antagonism between the Tsar and his subjects. The Tsar represented what he believed to be progress and civilisation ; the people refused to desert their attachment to the past. The victory was won by the sovereign ; but few will refuse to admit that it was dearly purchased.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PETER'S SECOND JOURNEY.

WE have desired to present this tragic story in an uninterrupted narrative. We must now go back to Peter's two years of travel in 1716 and 1717, which preceded the trial of his heir. Twenty years before he had journeyed as a learner; he now made a triumphal progress, as a victorious monarch. He set out early in February 1716, and was accompanied by his niece Catherine, the daughter of Iván. His first stopping-place was Danzig, where he had an interview with King Augustus. It is said that he arrived at Danzig on a Sunday, just at the time of Divine service, and went to church. During the service, feeling a draught, he took the wig off the head of the Burgomaster, who sat next to him, and placed it on his own, returning it, at the close of the service, with thanks. Here also he celebrated the marriage of the Princess Catherine with Karl Leopold, Duke of Mecklenburg. The marriage turned out unhappily. Catherine had a daughter, known afterwards as Anna Leopoldóvna, who married Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick-Bremen, and had five children, the eldest of whom became Emperor of Russia for a short time in 1740, under the regency of his mother.

At Stettin, on May 18th, the Tsar had an interview with Frederick William, King of Prussia; and at Altona with the King of Denmark. From this place

he proceeded to Pymont to take the waters, those of Carlsbad being thought too strong for him. Here he enjoyed the company of Leibnitz, who admired him very much. He met his wife Catherine at Schwerin and carried her to Rostock, from which place he set out with forty-eight galleys. He tried to stimulate the Danes to attack Scania, but did not succeed, and in a letter to his wife he compared his two allies and himself to the three horses of a Russian *troika*, two of which, being young and unbroken, do nothing but impede the middle horse, which they ought to assist. In Copenhagen he was treated with distinguished honours by Danes, Dutch, and English. But they were all afraid of him and of each other. The Danes believed that he wished to attack Copenhagen; the others that the Danes had offered him, not only Danish Pomerania, but also the possession of Stettin. The English were perhaps the most alarmed, because English merchants looked with suspicion on Russia obtaining a dominant position in the Baltic. It is said that Admiral Norris received orders to annihilate the Russian fleet, to secure the person of the Tsar, and to secure the retirement of all the Russian troops; but the Admiral very properly represented to his sovereign the dangerous effect which such a proceeding would have on the many English who were living in Russia for purposes of commerce. They determined, however, to keep a sharp look-out on Peter's movements, and on no account to allow him to be alone in the Baltic. They thought it possible that he might get possession of Mecklenburg. Before this Admiral Norris had proposed a cruise in the Baltic, and had given Peter the command of the joint fleet. There were twenty-one Russian ships, eighteen Danish, and twenty-five Dutch vessels of war, the whole fleet, together with merchant vessels, making up a total of eight hundred sail.

The projected expedition against Scania caused

great terror, especially to England. It was feared that if Peter once obtained a footing in that part of Sweden, he would never leave it, and that he would become master of the Baltic. Therefore George I., both in his regal and his Electoral capacity, begged the Emperor to interfere. All that Peter could secure was a recognisance on the coast. He found Scania strongly fortified, and that it was defended by an army of twenty thousand men. Several Russian ships—especially the *Princess*, on which Peter was—were considerably injured by the Swedish fire. Peter was very much disappointed at the failure of this enterprise. He dismissed it with difficulty from his mind, and it was probably the reason why the alliance eventually broke up.

Peter left Copenhagen on October 27th, 1716, and went through Schwerin and Lübeck to Havelberg, where he had an interview with the King of Prussia. Here he found a cordial reception. England-Hanover, in its terror of Peter, had attempted to force Frederick William to insist upon the removal of Russian troops from German soil as dangerous to the existence of the Empire. But at that time there was great jealousy between Hanover and Brandenburg, who were both struggling for the predominance in Germany. Hanover had just received an apparent accession of strength by the elevation of her Elector to the English throne. It seems strange to us at the present day to think that there ever was a time when a dependency of the English crown might have aspired to the position in Germany now held by Prussia; but so it was. Frederick William saw his interests clearly. He made a note in the reply to the representations of Hanover: "Tomfoolery—shall refuse, and sit fast by brother Peter, and put a halter on the Hanoverians, that they may not hit me over the head and contest Pomerania."

To the argument that the Tsar wished to establish

himself in Germany by occupying Lübeck, Hamburg, and Wismar, the King replied : " The Tsar has given his word that he will take nothing for himself from the Empire. Besides this, part of his cavalry is marching towards Poland, and it would be impossible for him to take these three cities without artillery, which he does not possess." The result was the formation of an alliance to protect each other in case of attack, and to secure to Russia the provinces conquered by her against an attempt of Sweden to recover them. In pursuance of this policy the walls of Wismar were razed, much to the disgust of the Hanoverians.

Passing by Hamburg and Bremen, Peter reached his beloved Amsterdam. Here he expected to meet George I., but was disappointed. Catherine, after recovering from a confinement, the fruit of which died almost immediately, joined Peter at Amsterdam, and they took much pleasure in visiting his former haunts. He went to his old home at Zaandam, and both he and Catherine dined with his old friend Calf. Whilst he was in Holland an event happened which to some extent altered his relations with England. It was discovered from the papers of Count Gyllenborg, the Swedish representative in London, that Charles XII. had a design of invading Scotland with twelve thousand troops, in conjunction with the Pretender. Gyllenborg was arrested. Peter was delighted, and wrote to Apráxin : " Have I not been right in always drinking to the health of the Swede? One could not have bought at any price what he himself has done." The pleasure was, however, dashed by the discovery that Gyllenborg's papers seemed to implicate in the plot Erskine, the Tsar's physician, and it was suggested that Peter was also privy to it. Peter denied, with justice, that he had ever cherished ideas unfriendly to the Hanoverian succession.

Leaving Holland, Peter proceeded to Paris, in order

to lay the foundation of a Russo-French alliance, which has been so strangely revived in our own day. The first movement towards this alliance had come from France. The burning question in Europe for many years after the death of Louis XIV. was that of the French Succession, a question which, indeed, never arose, but which might have arisen at any time. If the weakly child, Louis XV., had died, the succession would have been disputed between two claimants—the Duke of Orleans, now Regent, and Philip V., King of Spain. Orleans was anxious to obtain as much support as possible amongst the Powers of Europe. He therefore deserted the Pretender, who had always been assisted by his predecessors, and formed a triple alliance with England-Hanover and Holland. He had also signed a secret treaty with Frederick William, promising the possession of Stettin as a price for a guarantee, and was now anxious to gain the adhesion of Peter. The Abbé Dubois was opposed to this step, as being likely to estrange the Maritime Powers, and eventually the arrangement was confined to a promise that France should not assist Sweden in the course of the war, should give a subsidy to Peter, and endeavour to bring about a peace which should not be unfavourable to Russia. In order to bring about this result, for which he was sincerely anxious, Peter determined to go himself to Paris. There was also an idea of marrying the unfortunate Alexis to a daughter of the Regent, and it is said that Peter cherished to the end of his life a scheme for uniting his own daughter Elizabeth to Louis XV.

Peter travelled slowly by way of Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend to Dunkirk, where he inspected the fortifications then in process of destruction, in accordance with the provisions of the treaty of Utrecht. From this place he wrote to Catherine: "It is very sad to look at the ruins of this fortress, and especially the harbour." He kept his Easter at

Calais. We are told of his habits, that "he rises early, breakfasts about ten o'clock, dines about seven, and retires before nine. He drinks *liqueurs* before meals, beer and wine in the afternoon, sups very little, and sometimes not at all." He arrived at Paris on May 7th, at half-past nine in the evening. Two apartments had been prepared for him, one at the Louvre and the other at the Hôtel Lesdigières, on the Seine, near the Arsenal. He only stayed an hour at the Louvre, where he found the rooms too large for him. He inspected the repast of sixty covers, which was ready there, but contented himself with bread and radishes, tasted six kinds of wine, and drank two glasses of beer. If Peter had been as moderate in his drinking as he was in his eating, he would probably have lived longer and would have had better health. He then retired to the Hôtel Lesdigières, where he slept in a small bedroom on a camp-bed. He was visited both by the Regent and the King, Louis XV., the latter a child of seven years old. We are told that at the end of the visit Peter rose, took the King up in his arms, and kissed him several times with great politeness and tenderness. His account to Catherine is: "I inform you that last Monday the little King visited me here; he is only a finger or two taller than our dwarf Luke. The child is very handsome in face and build, and sensible enough for his age." In several letters he mentions the painful impression which the condition of the peasantry made upon him.

It is interesting to see what the leaders of the Great Nation thought of Peter. France was at this time giving the law to Europe in manners and refinement, and praise from her was the judgment of a *connoisseur*. Villeroy wrote: "I must tell you that this Prince, said to be barbarous, is not so at all. He displayed sentiments of grandeur, generosity, and politeness, which we by no means expected." The Regent's

mother, the famous Palatine Princess, one of the acutest judgments that ever came near a throne, writes : "I received to-day a great visit, that of my hero the Tsar. I find that he has very good manners, taking this expression *sans façon*, and not in the least affected. He has much judgment. He speaks bad German, but makes himself understood without trouble, and talks very freely. He is polite to everybody, and is much liked."

Peter spent his time in a manner which we can well imagine from what we have previously heard of him. He saw everything that was to be seen. A medal was struck in his honour with the inscription *Vires acquirit eundo*. He was solemnly received by the Sorbonne, and presented with a plan for the union of the Eastern and Western Churches. He was elected a member of the Académie des Sciences. His portrait was painted by Rigaud. His personality, his knowledge, his many-sided interests in politics, in handicraft, and in science, made a deep impression. His geniality was acknowledged by all. St. Simon, the great critic of that Court, says of the alliance : "Nothing could be more advantageous to us, both in respect to our commerce, as well as to our prestige in the North, in Germany, and in the whole of Europe." He also describes him thus : "He is a very tall man, well made, not too stout, with a roundish face, a high forehead and fine eyebrows, a short nose—but not too short—large at the end. His lips are rather thick, his complexion a ruddy brown, fine black eyes, large, lively, piercing, and well apart, a majestic and gracious look when he wished, otherwise severe and stern, with a twitching which did not often return, but which disturbed his look and his whole expression, and inspired fear. This lasted but a moment, accompanied by a wild and terrible look, and passed away as quickly. His whole air showed his intellect, his reflection, and his greatness, and did not lack a certain grace." After describing

his dress, he says : " With all this simplicity, and in whatever bad carriage or company he might be, one could not fail to perceive the air of greatness which was natural to him."

Peter left Paris on Sunday, June 20th. He passed by Rheims, and it is said that on being shown the missal on which the kings of France had for many years taken the coronation oath, he read it easily, to the great amazement of the clergy who did not know that it was written in Slavonic. He proceeded to Spa, where he drank the waters for five weeks. He joined Catherine at Amsterdam on August 2nd. Here the treaty, which had been the subject of much negotiation, was signed on August 15th. It obliged the three Powers of France, Russia, and Prussia, to guarantee the treaties of Utrecht and Baden, and to do their best to bring about peace in the North. At the same time, the good offices of France to this end were not to be supported by force. France also promised that when her engagements with Sweden came to an end, in April 1718, she would consider the possibility of acceding to Peter's request of putting Russia in Sweden's place. The Tsar returned to Petersburg on October 20th, and Catherine, whom he had left at Wesel, arrived the same evening.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE PEACE OF NYSTADT.

THE War of the Spanish Succession had long since come to an end, and all parties were desirous that the Great Northern War, which began before it, should also find its termination. We know that Peter himself was anxious for peace. Europe could not wish it less, because the continuance of the war seemed only to increase the power of Russia, which every one had learned to dread. Sweden had, indeed, lost much, but she feared that she might lose more. It was often said that peace was impossible so long as Charles XII. was alive, and many wished for his death, and insinuated that he was mad and ought to be deposed. Charles, however, had altered his opinion. In 1716, a Swedish general, Rang, began to speak to Kurákin of peace. At the time when Russia and France were approaching each other, Kurákin had many conferences with Charles's devoted friend Poniatowski, in which Baron Görtz, the confidential adviser of Charles, also took a part. The result of these conversations was the proposal of a conference in Finland, a quiet country, where things could be done in secret. When some agreement had been come to, Peter and Charles could have an interview. At last a village called Löfö, near Bomarsund, in one of the Aland Islands, was fixed upon.

Peter met Görtz at the Palace of Loo in August 1717, and agreed to the Congress. The consent of

Charles XII. was given shortly afterwards. But the outlook was not altogether peaceful at this time. Peter would have been very glad if Denmark would have consented to invade Scania, and the Danes could not feel comfortable so long as the Russian force remained in Mecklenburg. Prussia was also alarmed lest the Tsar should demand too much. He had agreed to surrender Finland if necessary, but Frederick William would have liked him to have given up Reval as well. Peter, on the other hand, insisted upon keeping the whole of Livonia. Notwithstanding this, the treaty of Havelberg was renewed, and Peter promised to keep the King of Prussia informed of the progress of the negotiations. The English also had their share in bringing about a general peace. At this time Admiral Norris was in Amsterdam, concluding a treaty of commerce. Golófskin proposed to him a union of the English and Russian fleets, which should threaten the Swedish coasts, under the command of Peter, every year until peace was concluded. It would have been, of course, impossible for the English Government to have consented to any arrangement of the kind.

The conference in Aland began in May, 1718. Bruce and Ostermann represented Russia, and Görtz and Gyllenborg Sweden. Peter instructed his representatives to propose the cession by Sweden of Ingria, Livonia, Esthonia, including Reval, Carelia, and Viborg; the restitution to Sweden of Finland beyond the River Kymmene; freedom of trade between the two countries; that the waters of the Finnish coast should be open to commerce; peace between Sweden and Poland, and the recognition of Augustus II. as king; and the cession of Stettin to Prussia. The King of Denmark was to be included in the treaty if he gave up the Swedish territory he had conquered; and the King of England, as Elector, was to be included if he was willing to make an honourable peace

within three months. Charles, on the other hand, proposed that Russia should restore to Sweden all the provinces conquered in the war, with everything they had contained—men, money, and provisions—and should pay an indemnity, in addition, for having begun the war unjustly. The views of the principal parties were so divergent that it was difficult to see how any middle terms could be arrived at.

The battle at first raged round the possession of Livonia and Esthonia. It then narrowed itself to conflict about Reval. The Swedes said that Finland would be of no use to them without it, and the Russians refused to surrender what they considered to be the key of the Gulf. Görtz went away for a whole month, ostensibly to consult his master. He returned with an extraordinary plan for a close alliance between Charles and Peter—the conquest of Norway, Mecklenburg, Bremen, Verden, and even parts of Hanover. Prussia was to surrender Stettin, and to receive part of Poland, and King Stanislaus was to be restored. This was a plan of his own, the child of a brain fertile in such projects. Charles only changed his views as far as to give up to Russia, Ingria, and Carelia, which had formerly belonged to her ; but he insisted on receiving back Livonia, Esthonia, and Finland, conquered in an unjust war. Negotiations seemed hopeless; an arrangement was further off than ever. Görtz had been for weeks absent, and did not return. Ostermann gradually formed the opinion that nothing but an invasion of Sweden by Russia would bring the Swedes to their senses. Then suddenly arrived the startling intelligence that Charles XII. was dead, and that Görtz had been arrested.

In the late autumn of 1718 King Charles had set out on an expedition for the conquest of Norway, then belonging to Denmark. He laid siege to the town of Fredrikshall, or rather to the Castle of Fredriksten, which commanded it. On the evening of December 11th

he rode up to the farthest portion of the besieging works, and watched the operations. He climbed up and leaned upon the breastwork, with his chin on his left hand. Suddenly his hand fell to his side, and his head sank upon his shoulder. A musket-ball from the fortress had pierced his left temple, and he was dead. He was succeeded by his sister, Ulrica Eleonora, the wife of the Crown Prince of Hesse-Cassel. Ostermann went to St. Petersburg, while Bruce remained behind in Aland to continue the negotiations. Peter took full advantage of the change. He demanded with more insistence than before the cession of Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, Viborg, and Kexholm, but declared himself ready to pay a sum of money for them. Each side declared itself anxious for peace ; but the arrangements lingered, and war again appeared to be imminent.

Great efforts were made to separate Prussia from Sweden. The King of England, as Elector of Hanover, did his best to effect this object, and promised great advantages to Frederick William. Peter fitted out a large fleet with troops, which landed in the neighbourhood of Stockholm, and burned two towns and a hundred and thirty villages. Apráxin devastated the neighbourhood of the Swedish capital, and swarms of Cossacks made their appearance in the same district. This was in July 1719. Ostermann was sent to Stockholm, but he found public opinion not disposed to peace at any price, and the only offers he received were the cession of Narva, Reval, and Esthonia, but the surrender of Finland and Livonia. Peter, on hearing this, sent an ultimatum to Aland, stating that the conference must either be concluded within a fortnight or broken off. The Swedes refused these terms, and the conference came to an end.

Sweden was relying on the assistance of England. A treaty was concluded between George I. and Ulrica. As Elector of Hanover he received the towns of Bremen and Verden, upon payment of a million thalers ; as

King of Great Britain he made an alliance with Sweden, by which he promised to provide a large subsidy, and to assist her to prevent the predominance of Russia in the Baltic. Austria now entered into the field. The relations between her and Russia had been strained by the death of Alexis. Pressure was put upon the Tsar to withdraw his troops from Poland and Mecklenburg, and there was some talk of Livonia being given to Poland. Peter attempted to renew friendly relations with the Emperor, but without success. In answer to this Poland was invaded by new swarms of Russian armies, and Sheremétief, Rönne, and Men-shikóf played in turn the part of dictators in that unfortunate country. Peter again used his favourite method of bribery. There was some discussion as to a possible partition of Poland, and it was felt that it would be useless to give Livonia to a country which was itself falling to pieces from internal weakness. Russia, in want of allies, turned to Spain as a possible friend. That country was now governed by the great minister Alberoni, and its weight was not to be despised in the balance of European power. But the fall of that minister brought these negotiations to an end.

The relations between England and Russia continued to be unsatisfactory. Both sides had cause for complaint, the English that Peter was secretly favouring the Pretender, the Russians that an English squadron appeared every summer in the Baltic. Peter knew that there was no unity of opinion in England with regard to Russia. On the one hand, the interests of England and Hanover were not precisely the same; on the other, there was no likelihood of Great Britain undertaking an offensive war. Her power was not wielded by a commanding mind, and she needed peace to consolidate the new dynasty. Carteret might feel that it was against the imperial interests of his country to permit the aggrandisement of Russia. English merchants, on the other hand, were not likely to view with favour the

outbreak of a war between the two countries. When Peter asked why the English fleet appeared in the Baltic, he was told that England was acting as a mediator of peace, and that this step was taken to enforce her authority. But he felt rightly that it would be impossible to accept the mediation of a country, the Government of which was notoriously favourable to Sweden and unfavourable to himself. The English demonstrations became somewhat ridiculous, and were laughed at by the Opposition in parliament. Admiral Norris could not prevent, in 1720, the landing of the Russians in Sweden, and the burning of a few towns and a good many villages. In 1721 a Swedish fleet was defeated by a Russian under the very eyes of the English Squadron. It was evident that Peter was not to be intimidated, and that he was as sure of the real inability of England to injure him as he was of the essential friendliness of Prussia.

At last George I. wrote to Queen Ulrica to urge her to make peace. He represented that these demonstrations were very costly, and could only be carried through by a very small majority in parliament. Sweden found by this that she could not depend on effective aid from England, and there were signs that public opinion in that country was coming over to the side of Russia. Peace seemed to be now in prospect; and it had been brought about by the dogged persistency of the Tsar. Diplomatic courtesies were exchanged between Ulrica and the Tsar. It was agreed to renew the negotiations somewhere in Finland in the neighbourhood of Abo. Eventually the town of Nystadt, founded by Gustavus Adolphus in 1617, about fifty miles from Abo, was chosen. Matters were, however, prepared by the mediation of the French. Campredon, the French Ambassador in Russia, was informed that Peter was prepared to surrender Finland, but nothing more; and with that message he set off to Sweden.

The conferences were opened at Nystadt on May 9th, 1721, Russia being represented by Bruce and Ostermann, and Sweden by Lilienstedt and Strömfeldt. It is remarkable that at this very time a Russian army was devastating Swedish territory. Livonia was surrendered without much difficulty, but there was a hard struggle for the possession of Viborg. The treaty was at last signed on September 10th. Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, a part of Carelia, with Viborg and its territory, became Russian territory. Finland was restored to Sweden, and Peter paid a sum of two million thalers for the advantages he gained. Writing to Apráxin immediately after he received the news of the peace he said: "Scholars generally finish their studies in seven years. Our schooling has been three times as long, but has received so good a termination that it could not be better."

The rejoicings which followed the peace were of the usual tumultuous character; but the most important feature of them was that Peter now assumed the title of Emperor. On September 15th he sailed into his capital in his yacht, bringing the news of peace. After landing, he went to pray in the Trinity Church, and was begged by his friends to accept the rank of Admiral of the Fleet. Casks of brandy were brought out into the open square. Peter mounted a platform, and, after announcing the end of the war, drank a bumper to the health of the people, amidst cheers, salutes from cannon, and *feux de joie*. Twelve dragoons, with white scarves, banners, laurel wreaths, and trumpeters, rode into the city as heralds.

A week afterwards, at a great masquerade which lasted several days, Peter behaved like a child, danced on the tables, and sang songs. On the last day of October the Senate decreed to him the attribute of "Great" the name of "Father of his country," and the title of Emperor. Two days later he went in procession to a solemn service. When this was over,

Golófkin, the Chancellor, begged him, in the name of the Senate and the Holy Synod, to allow himself to be called Peter the Great, Father of his country, and Emperor of all the Russias. Then followed cries of "Long live the Tsar!" the ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, and the discharge of muskets both inside and outside the church. Peter, in accepting these honours, said: "I wish our people to recognise in this war, and in this peace, the power of God for the blessing of Russia. We must thank God with all our might; but whilst hoping for peace we must not neglect our military strength, so as not to suffer the fate of the Greek Empire." The new title was immediately recognised by Prussia and Holland, and by Sweden in 1723; but it was disregarded by England and the German Emperor till 1742, and by France and Spain till 1745, and was not accepted by Poland till 1764.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WAR WITH PERSIA.

WE must now deal with the early history of the relations of Russia with the far East, which are a matter of such burning interest to our own country at the present time. When Iván the Terrible, the first Russian Tsar, who reigned from 1533 to 1584, conquered Kazán in 1552, and Astrakhan in 1554, the Nogay Tartars, who dwelt in the south-east of Russia, said : " If the Tsar mixes himself up in our affairs, we are all lost. He will conquer the whole of the Ural, then Derbent, and we shall all become his subjects. Our books say that all the princes of Islam must, at some time or other, obey the Russian Tsar." It was at that time that the Khans of Khiva and Bokhara established a diplomatic connection with Russia, in order to obtain commercial advantages, and that some of the princes of the Caucasus invited the Tsar to interfere as arbitrator in the quarrels that divided them. In the reign of the Tsar Boris (1598-1605), a Russian army appeared in the Caucasus, and played a certain part in the struggles between the princes of Imeritia, Grusia, and other provinces in that mountainous region. From the middle of the seventeenth century emissaries of their princes began to appear in Moscow, and to ask for protection against Persia. The Prince of Kachetia sent an embassy to the Tsar Alexis (1645—1676) to ask for his protection, on the ground that he had protected the Little Russians in their struggle against Poland.

At the same time, a long delay elapsed before Russia was willing to go to war with Persia for the sake of the Caucasian Princes. The commercial interests of the country made the preservation of peace in the south-east a desirable thing. It was of importance, both to Russia and to Western Europe, to preserve intact the commercial road which led into the heart of Asia. The stress of the struggle for trade was then felt at the Caspian Sea, as it has now moved off to much more distant climes. Almost all the States of Europe had endeavoured to make commercial treaties with Russia, in order to get a right of passing through that country on the way to Persia. Before the accession of Peter, Russian writers had pointed out that Russia was the natural medium for the trade between Europe and Asia, and that it was necessary to preserve her commercial interests in Bokhara, Khiva, and Persia. They hoped to see the Caspian Sea swarming with Russian ships, and that it might be to their country what the Adriatic was to Venice. It was certain that a monarch of genius, like Peter, would adopt these ideas, and we cannot be surprised to find Witsen, the Burgomaster of Amsterdam, advocating Russian trade with Persia and China; and John Perry, the energetic co-operator with the Tsar, making exhaustive studies in the physical geography of the Caspian Sea.

Russia had been brought into connection with China through the conquest of Siberia in the seventeenth century. At the end of that century there was a Russian Church in Pekin. Russian caravans went regularly to China. Peter had the opportunity of gratifying the Chinese Emperor by sending him an English doctor. But these efforts were foiled by the influence of the Jesuits, who were predominant in that country. There was greater hope of success on the shores of the Caspian. Peter hoped to compensate himself by the acquisition of this sea, for the loss of the Euxine. The reason, or the excuse, for interfering with the inde-

pendence of half-civilised tribes, is always found in the insecurity of the frontier. Russian caravans, on their road to Persia and Central Asia were often exposed to treachery and violence. Especially in the year 1712, the Lesgians were guilty of these excesses. In consequence of this, a Russian ambassador was sent to Persia in 1715, with instructions to gain every possible information as to the condition of the country, and to examine the prospect of a future trade with India.

In 1713 a Turcoman, who had come to Astrakhan, developed a scheme, according to which the Tsar should make himself master of the upper waters of the Amu, where there was gold ; and should restore the former course of the Amu Darya into the Caspian Sea, which had been artificially diverted. These ideas were eagerly adopted by a Circassian prince, Alexander Békovitch, living in St. Petersburg. Peter had long desired to open a road for commerce to India by way of the Amu, and he determined that Békovitch should lead an expedition to Khiva. His instructions were drawn up by Peter's hand. The Khan of Khiva was to be made to recognise the suzerainty of Russia ; the Khan of Bokhara was, if possible, to do the same. Békovitch was to be accompanied by a small army of four thousand men, by marine officers and engineers. The expedition was a complete failure. The Khan of Khiva was naturally suspicious that Peter's object was not an embassy, but a military expedition. He persuaded Békovitch to separate his force into small divisions, on the pretence that it would be easier to feed them, and they were then easily attacked and crushed in detail. Békovitch was murdered. The forts which had been erected on the Caspian could not be maintained. The news gradually reached Russia, and when in 1720 the Khan sent an envoy to ask for pardon, and for the renewal of friendship, he was thrown into prison at St. Petersburg, and died there. It was

said that the Khan after this, receiving a letter from the Tsar, tore it into pieces and gave it to his children to play with.

It was evident that the extension of the Russian frontier to the East would only be a question of time, and that the Turcomans and Calmucks, and other half-civilised nations would eventually be Russian subjects. There was then no powerful state at their back to support them against Russian aggressions. It was a different matter in the South, where an extension of authority over the Armenians and the Caucasians would bring Russia into conflict with Persia and the Porte. However, attempts to extend his dominions in that direction occupied Peter in the last year of his reign, and led to the campaigns in Persia which we must now consider.

Peter had, for some time past, paid considerable attention to Persia. He had treated the Armenian merchants in Russia with especial favour, and they had begged him to liberate them from the Persian yoke. He contemplated the conversion of the Caspian into a Russian lake, and the development of the wealthy district which lay to the south of that sea. With these views he despatched Volýnsky, who had been previously employed with Shaffirof at Constantinople, as ambassador to Persia, writing his instructions with his own hand. He was to pay particular attention to the province of Ghilan, investigating its geographical characteristics with the utmost secrecy. He was also to study the military power of Persia, the number and condition of its fortresses, and the relations between Persia and Turkey, and, if possible, to influence the persons immediately in contact with the Shah by bribery. He was to exert his efforts to give the Persian trade a direction in favour of Russia, to secure the favour of the Armenians by presents and good words, and to collect information with regard to their number, their condition, and their political sympathies.

Volýnsky reached Ispahan in the spring of 1717, but was badly received. He was subjected to a sort of confinement and requested to depart as soon as possible. However, by astute diplomacy, he contrived to remain. He represented to the Tsar the state of things in the country to which he had been sent as miserable in the extreme. The Shah was unfit to rule, and the result was anarchy. Insurrection was rife, and poverty universal. It would be easy to conquer a considerable portion of Persia with a small army, and no time could be more favourable for the enterprise than the present.

It was necessary, however, to wait until peace had been concluded with Sweden, and Volýnsky, after signing a treaty of commerce, returned to Russia. On his journey home he wintered in Shemaha, and there heard from the commander of the Persian army, who was a converted Christian, that it would be easy to capture that province by a *coup-de-main*. He was told that the troops had not received their pay, and were ready to desert, also that the Shah had richly rewarded the Khan of Khiva for the murder of Békovitch. The Persians were indeed expecting an attack on the side of Russia, and it was said that an army of eighty thousand men, and a fleet of several hundred sail, were ready to begin the campaign. The Khan of Shemaha was only waiting for the arrival of the Russians to throw off his allegiance to Persia.

In 1720 Volýnsky was made Governor of Astrakhan. From that place he continued to urge Peter to begin the war. At last, towards the end of May 1722, the Emperor, as we must now call him, set out for Astrakhan. He was accompanied by Admiral Apráxin, Tolstói, Prince Cantemir, and the Empress Catherine. When he arrived on the shores of the Caspian he was joined by the governors of several towns, who gave in their submission. He issued a proclamation in which he declared that his object was not to make war

against Persia, but to punish the robbers who had attacked the Russian caravans, and the rebels who had attacked Shemaha ; that when he had freed the Shah from his mutinous subjects he would ask for nothing except the cession of some provinces bordering on the shores of the Caspian. His army, which contained Cossacks, Calmucks, and Tartars, was, in all, a hundred and six thousand strong. The cavalry were sent forward to Derbent, and the Emperor embarked with the infantry at Astrakhan on July 29th. It was necessary to employ nearly five hundred transports.

The expedition had to fight its way to Derbent ; but the town was taken at the beginning of September. At Tarku, near the modern town of Petrovsk, Peter met with a cordial reception. However, the plan of advancing to Shemaha, and from thence to Tiflis had to be given up. The authorities of Baku refused to receive a Russian garrison, the transport fleet had not arrived, and provisions were becoming scarce. So after leaving a garrison in Derbent, and building a fort in the River Sulak, to which he gave the name of Holy Cross, Peter sailed back to Astrakhan, which he reached on October 15th. He was there seized with a violent attack of illness, which was partly due to the excessive heat. He, however, employed himself by drawing up minute plans for further operations. He wished to occupy the provinces south of the Caspian, if possible by friendly means. He ordered that accurate reports should be written on the province of Ghilan, Masanderan, and Astrabad, particularly as to places which were suitable for growing sugar. Brückner remarks that it is possible that Peter's anxiety to obtain possession of these provinces arose from a fear lest they might be occupied by the Turks. After completing their arrangements, and sending Colonel Shipof to occupy the town of Resht, at the southern end of the Caspian, Peter returned to Moscow, which he entered in triumph on December 25th.

Shipof executed his task without difficulty. It is often easy to capture an Eastern town, but difficult to retain it. Persian troops gradually assembled round Resht, and Shipof had to take measures for his safety. The governor now said that he no longer needed the aid of Shipof, and advised him to retire. The negotiations continued for several weeks; but the Russians remained. Shipof also succeeded in repelling a Persian force which attacked him in overwhelming numbers. Just at this time Shah Hussein succeeded Shah Mahmoud on the throne of Persia, and adopted the policy of making an alliance with the Porte. This altered the situation of affairs. The Turks were probably as well aware as the Russians of the anarchical condition of the Persian Empire, and were intending to occupy the very provinces which Peter had marked for his own. Russian troops had now obtained a firm footing in Ghilan, and in the summer of 1723 General Matíúshkin got possession of the important harbour of Baku. It was, however, unlikely that these successes could be made of permanent value without a war with Turkey.

Here also the dogged perseverance of Peter was to serve him in good stead. Notwithstanding the representations of England and the Emperor, who wished for nothing more earnestly than a breach between Russia and the Porte, the treaty of Adrianople, which had been concluded in 1713 for a term of years, was now changed into an "everlasting" peace. Neplúief, however, had a hard task to keep things quiet. As the Christians and Armenians had invoked the help of the Tsar, so now the Lesgians and other devotees of Islam claimed the support of the Sultan. The French Ambassador warned Neplúief that his countrymen should avoid the dominions of the Porte, and not attempt to make conquests in Grusia or Armenia. The Shah, in his extremity, appealed for aid to the Sultan. The representatives of England, Austria, and

Venice represented the growing power of Peter. They said that if Grusia and Armenia became Russian, Trebizond would be in peril, and that harbour might serve as a base of operations against Turkey in Asia. The Turks were anxious to avoid war, and they contented themselves with enforcing upon Neplúief some very candid truths. But they began to arm, and reinforcements were sent to Azof and to Erzerum. The people were demanding war; there was talk of an alliance between the Porte and the Khan of Khiva. Above all, the occupation of Derbent was a thorn in the side of Turkey. They secretly sent money and promised troops to the Princes of the Caucasus to assist them to drive out the Russians. They at last made a categorical demand that the Russian troops should be withdrawn.

Peter was, however, steadfastly determined that he would cling to his possessions on the Caspian, even at the price of a war with the Porte. And it was, perhaps, this very firmness which prevented a rupture. Tahmasp Mirza, the son and successor of Shah Hussein, had sent an ambassador to St. Petersburg, and here, on September 29th, 1723, a treaty was signed, by which, on condition that Peter should assist him in recovering the Persian throne, he agreed to give up Derbent and Baku, as well as the other provinces of Ghilan, Mazanderan, and Astrabad. Peter lost no time in consolidating these acquisitions. Forts were erected in the newly won provinces, and careful inquiries were made as to the advantages to be derived from them, the possible production of sugar, naphtha, and lemons, the possibility of navigating the Kura, and the distance from Armenia and other neighbouring countries. The result of this was an arrangement with Turkey. The French Ambassador, the Marquis de Bonac, acted as mediator, but without instructions from his Court; and on June 23rd, 1724, a treaty of demarcation was signed between Russia and Turkey

with regard to the limits of the Russian dominions on the side of the Caucasus and on the side of Persia.

When Rumiántsef was sent to Constantinople to ratify this treaty, Peter addressed to him the last instructions which he ever wrote on Eastern affairs. "Armenians have come here with a request that we will take them under our protection. We have allowed them to settle in our new Caspian provinces. If the Turks say anything about this, tell them that we did not invite the Armenians, but that they begged for our support, on the ground that they profess the same religious belief, and that we cannot refuse it, from a feeling of common Christianity." Noble words indeed, which might serve as an example to the potentates of the present day ! Peter was occupied in the last days of his life with his duties to the Armenian Christians, and his relations to Grusia. He had set a firm foot upon the Caspian as he had upon the Neva and Baltic, and he regarded each as the starting-place of new conquests to be made in the interests of civilisation. The conquests in the West were durable; those in Persia lasted but for a season. The deadly climate forbade a lengthy tenure. The Persians refused to ratify the treaty of St. Petersburg, and continued to fight both against Russia and Turkey. At last, in 1732, the Empress Anna signed a treaty at Resht, by which the conquered provinces were restored to Persia. It was reckoned that from the year 1722, in which Peter had entered the country, till the time of its evacuation, there had perished in it a hundred and thirty thousand men.

that have we the right to criticise or to abuse. Nature gives us so few really great characters that we cannot afford to lose one of them, and we must not look too narrowly into the guise in which they appear to us. Still, no account of Peter would be complete without some notice of that wild and boisterous humour which surged in him up to his death, like the tossing sea which he loved so well.

The last two years of his life were not without clouds. His change of the Senate into a number of colleges or boards had not been a success, and there were bitter quarrels between those placed at their head. Peter had begun to see that the scheme was a failure, and that the oppressed and poor had lost by not being able to make complaints personally to the Tsar. An observer writes: "There are over sixteen thousand unfinished cases in the Senate, partly because in the provinces there are none but thieves and petty tyrants, partly because the Empire is too great, and especially because it is not good to hunt with unwilling dogs; and the magnates would much rather do nothing than sit in their colleges." Peter arrived at Petersburg from his campaign in December 1723. The New Year was celebrated with all kinds of festivals, but the merriment was chequered by famine. Lefort, the Polish Minister writes: "The masquerade is at the door, and the talk is only about amusements, at a time when the common people have tears in their eyes. We are on the eve of some sad extremity. The misery increases from day to day, and the streets are full of people who are trying to sell their children. Orders have been published to give nothing to beggars; what will they become but highway robbers?" Much money had been spent upon the Turkish campaign, and much more was spent on efforts to bribe the officials of the Porte. Great sums had been devoted to public works, ports, and canals, profitable perhaps in the future, but bringing no immediate return.

During the spring of 1723 Peter spent some time at Peterhof, where he drank mineral waters, and took exercise by mowing grass, and long walks with a knapsack. An ambassador complained that the Emperor was so much occupied with his villas, and with sailing in the Gulf of Finland, that no one had the heart to interrupt him with mention of business. During this summer also took place the consecration at St. Petersburg of the little boat in which Peter had taken his first lessons in sailing. The feast lasted ten hours, and every one was obliged to be present, even the Empress, the Princesses, the Duchess of Mecklenburg, and all the ladies of the Court. Peter said that the man who did not get drunk on that day would be a good-for-nothing fellow, and certainly set the example. The scene which followed had better not be described.

On May 18th, 1724, an important event took place, the coronation of the Empress Catherine in the Cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow. Peter himself placed the crown on his wife's head, while keeping the sceptre in his own hand. The ceremony was followed by the usual festivities. In 1722, before leaving for the Persian campaign, the Emperor had issued a decree which gave each Emperor the power of nominating his successor. This undoubtedly passed over the claims of his grandson Peter. It was not known whom he would choose himself—perhaps one of his daughters, perhaps his wife or his grandson. But the coronation of Catherine seemed to indicate that he wished her to succeed in case he should die suddenly; and it is reported that he actually stated this to be the case.

On returning to Petersburg the Emperor showed even an increased disinclination to public business, and affairs got into great confusion. Indeed, the character of Peter seemed to have changed. Sometimes he was indefatigable at work, at others he preferred to

be alone, and was occasionally so morose that no one dared to speak to him about business. Now he would send for his doctor, now for his confessor, and then, disregarding the welfare both of his body and his soul, give himself up to drinking. In August 1724 the consecration of a new church at Tsárskoe-Seló was celebrated by the consumption of three thousand bottles of wine. Peter was ill in bed for a week after it, but soon indulged in a new debauch. In November he returned to St. Petersburg, but set out immediately to visit the iron-works at Systersbeck. On his way, at Lakhta, in the Bay of Cronstadt, he saw a boat, full of soldiers and sailors, grounded in stormy weather before his eyes. Peter ordered his men to sail up to it, jumped into the water up to his waist, and helped to drag the boat off the shoal. He worked the whole night in the water, and succeeded in saving the lives of twenty men, while several of his own crew were drowned in the operation. The next day he felt an attack of fever, gave up his journey, and sailed back to the capital.

On his return he became gradually worse. He suffered from stone and from other affections of the bladder. He was sometimes in such pain that he was unable to attend to any business. Still, grave and gay were most incongruously mingled in his life. His chosen boon-companions had been formed many years before into a society which was called "The Most Frolicsome and Drunken Synod." The head of this, Buturlín, had recently died, and it became necessary to elect another Prince-Pope, as this officer was called. The fourteen "cardinals" were shut up, as in a regular conclave, each in a separate compartment, not one being allowed to come out until the new Pope was chosen. At the same time each member had to swallow, every quarter of an hour, a large spoonful of whisky. Early next morning they were let out, and, as they could not decide in any other way, they had to

ballot for their pontiff. The Pope was then placed upon a throne, and all were obliged to kiss his slipper. In the evening supper was served with the flesh of wolves, foxes, bears, cats, and rats.

At the blessing of the River Neva on the day of Epiphany, Peter caught a violent cold; but this did not prevent him from attending with Catherine the disorderly wedding of a servant. At the end of the month he was engaged to go to Riga, to be present at the marriage of his daughter Anna to the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp. From this union sprang the Emperor Peter III., and the present Imperial House of Russia. He was so unwell that his journey was postponed for a week. He was then obliged to take to his bed, and it was found he had inflammation of the bladder. He became gradually worse. On February 2nd he confessed and received the Sacrament. Four days later he signed a proclamation, by which all persons who had been exiled with hard labour were set free, and all criminals were pardoned except those who were guilty of murder and other serious crimes. He was in the utmost agony, and could not repress his cries. In a quiet interval he called for a slate, on which he only wrote the words "Give all." He had probably intended to designate his successor. After this he fell into a stupor, which lasted for thirty-six hours; and on February 8th, 1725, at six o'clock in the morning he breathed his last. He was only fifty-two years of age, and with care might have lived much longer. Boerhave, the great Dutch physician, was consulted as to his malady, but too late. When he heard of his death, he exclaimed, "My God, was it possible to allow that great man to die, when he might have been cured with a pennyworth of medicine?" There is no doubt that his exposure in the sea at Lakhta was a principal cause of his death.

When he was in the final agony the Senate, after long debate, decided that, in case of his death, they

would recognise Catherine as his successor. The populace of the capital heard of the accession of Catherine simultaneously with the death of the Emperor. Whatever may have been the concealed discontent, there was no active opposition. The body of the deceased monarch lay in state in a hall decorated with Gobelin tapestry. On March 19th it was transferred with solemn pomp to the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the fortress of the same name. Here it lay for many years under a canopy in the centre of the church, and it was not till June 1st, 1731, in the reign of the Empress Anna, that it was transferred to the vault which now contains it, where he rests with all his successors, except his grandson, the child of Alexis.

What shall we say of him? The story of his life and works is his best monument. Most remarkable is the energy of his vitality, the passion which he put into everything he did, work and play, humanity and cruelty. How different from his forefathers, whose lazy round was only broken by prayer and fasting! Up at four, immediate work at state business; at six to the Admiralty or the Senate—the whole day occupied till an early bed. Leisure, if it could be so called, spent in hammering, carpentering, the use of mathematical instruments. Never answer “Presently” was his order. The road of “To-morrow,” he knew, leads to the house of “Never.” He might have said, with Napoleon, “I may lose a battle, but I will never lose a minute.” Everything stuck fast when he was not there to push it. He was no friend of luxury. He slept on a plank, ate plainly and little, drank indeed too much, wore simple clothing, drove about in a gig. Yet his simplicity was not free from parsimony. His rough and boisterous horse play has been already noticed. Some of it belonged to his age. He had a demonic side to his personality; one might say that he was European in his intellect, Asiatic in his sport, Savage in his wrath. He possessed an extraordinary power

of enjoyment. His nature flowed out on all sides in an abundant stream.

His letters give a vivid picture of the man. Thousands of them have been preserved. They show, not only his capacity, his unresting activity, but his humour, his *bon-homie*, and his loveableness. With all this passion, he had the clearest insight. He desired to know everything as it was. He had no natural taste for literary pursuits ; he was a man of science above everything, and in that respect was the forerunner of a future age. Still, he did much for building and decoration ; he collected pictures and engravings. He often had his portrait painted, and had apparently a genuine passion for gardening. Perhaps his most valuable research was in geography. He inaugurated, if he did not carry out, important voyages of discovery. He gave a powerful impulse to the making of maps. His communications to the Académie des Sciences in Paris put the surroundings of the Caspian Sea in an entirely new light.

He exacted labour from all, but he was the first to submit to it himself. He imposed on no one a task which he was not himself willing to fulfil, or a sacrifice which he refused to bear. His little cottage at Zaandam may fitly be considered as the germ of his career. That wooden hut, with its rough tables and its cupboard-bed, enclosed now, like the shrine of a saint, in the stately building which his successors have erected round it, is a type of the Russian Empire of to-day ; founded in frugality and hard work, conspicuous to the world for its pageantry and magnificence. On the walls of that humble shanty, which Peter loved so well that he tried to reproduce its conditions wherever he went, hangs a tablet with an inscription written by Alexander I.—

“ Ничего главному человеку мало.”

Let us conclude with these words : “ Nothing Can be Small to a Great Man.” The material life of a man is but the clothing of his spirit, and it is by the spirit that we must judge him.

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